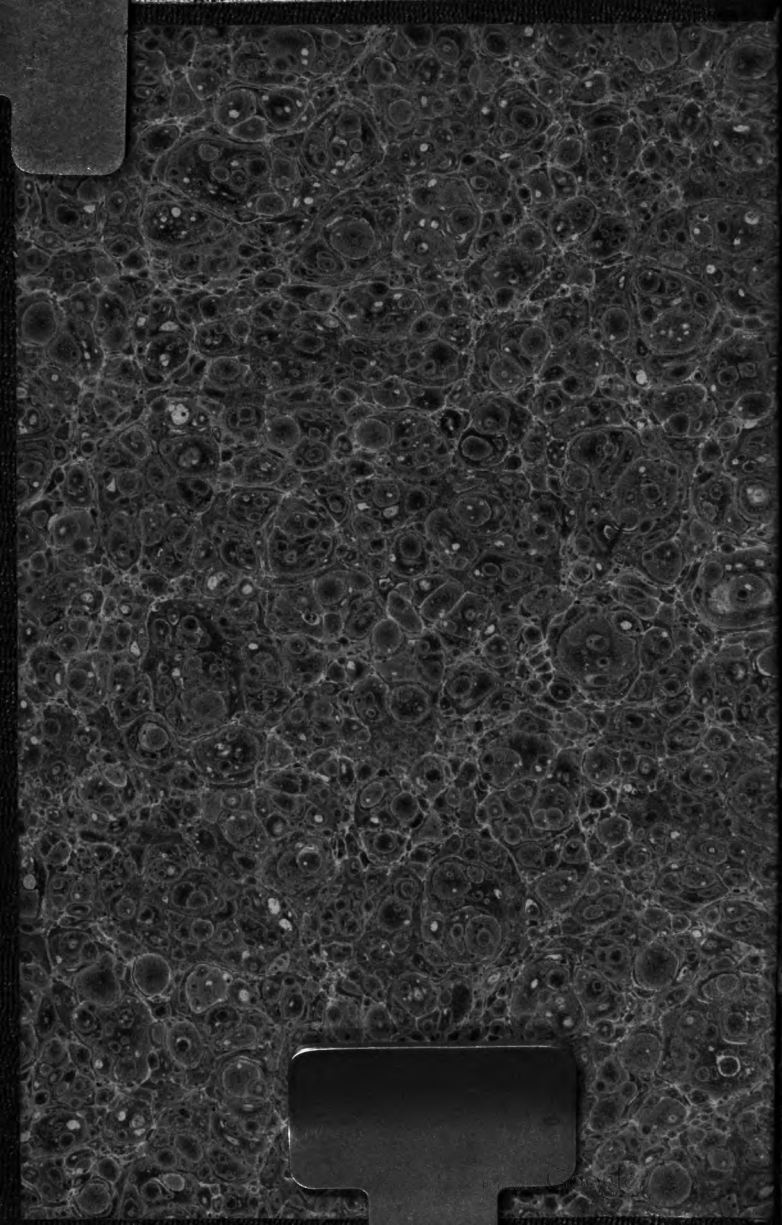
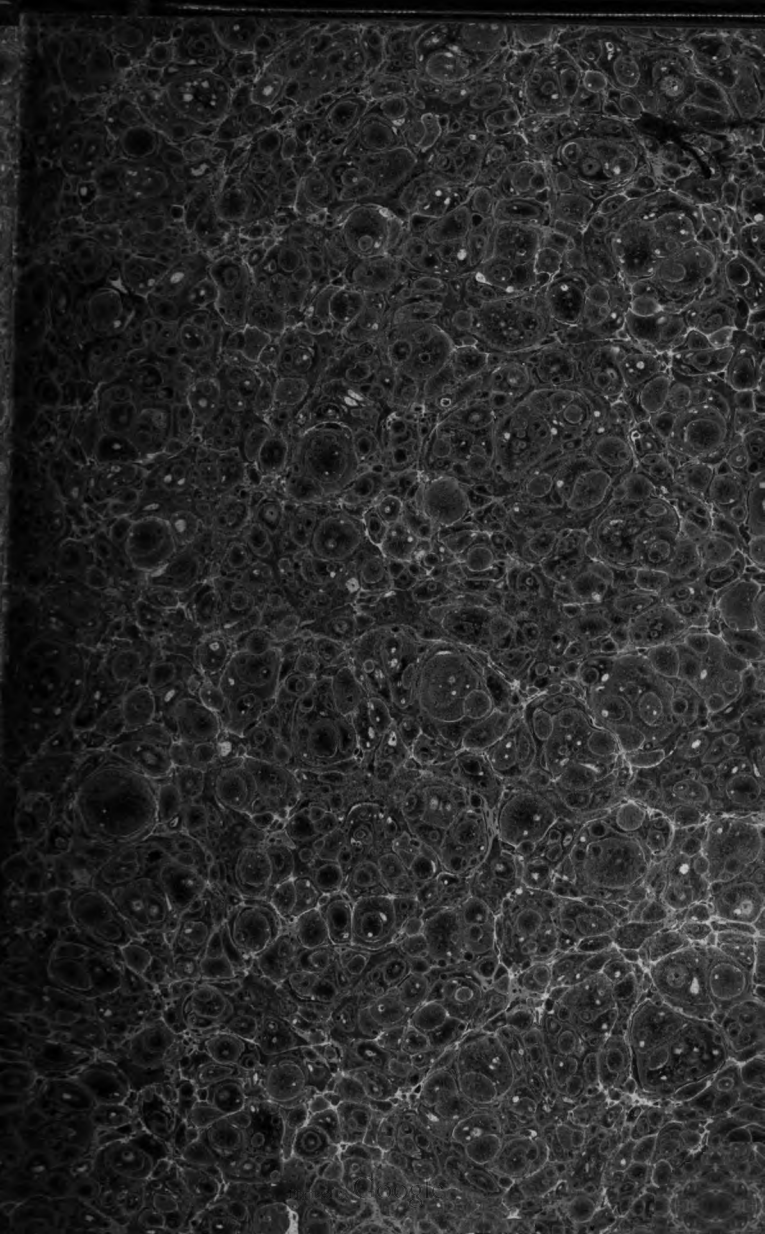

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HENRY HOWARD.

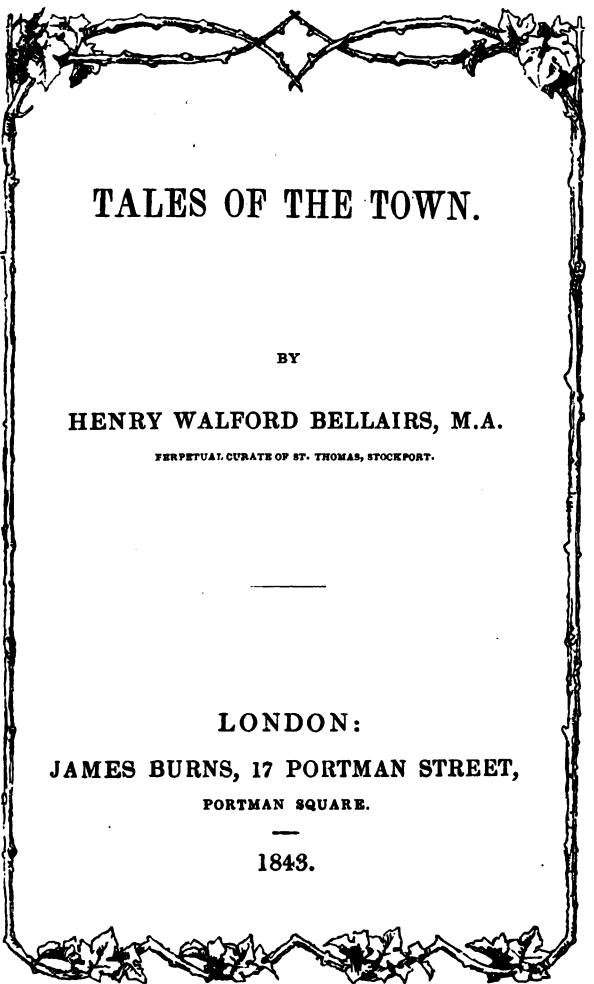


THE VICARAGE.

Page 11.

Does aught meet your ken
More fit to animate the poet's pen,—
Aught that more surely by its aspect fills
Pure minds with sinless envy, than the abode
Of the good priest: who, faithful through all hours
To his high charge, and truly serving God,
Has yet a heart and hand for trees and flowers,
Enjoys the walks his predecessors trod,
Nor covets lineal rights in lands and towers?

WORDSWORTH.

A decorative border made of stylized vines and leaves, forming a rectangular frame around the text.

TALES OF THE TOWN.

BY

HENRY WALFORD BELLAIRS, M.A.

PERPETUAL CURATE OF ST. THOMAS, STOCKPORT.

LONDON:

JAMES BURNS, 17 PORTMAN STREET,
PORTMAN SQUARE.

1843.



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TO THE

HON. AND REV. CHARLES HARRIS, A.M.

RECTOR OF WILTON, IN THE DIOCESE OF SARUM,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.

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HENRY HOWARD.

CHAPTER I.

The Birth.

Yes, thou art launch'd on the great sea of being;
Nor aught of things that are, or things to be,
Can wrest thy birthright,—immortality!
Onward, and ever onward, shalt thou fling
Eternity around thee, feeble thing;
Nor comet's course, nor rolling century,
Number thine years! The earth shall fold her wing.
And make her nest in darkness; from the sky
Shall pass away yon fiery sentinel,
And she, thy childhood's monthly chronicler,—
When from this womb of nature thou shalt climb
The mighty stair of being, borne sublime
The stars among, thyself a glorious star;
Or like a smouldering brand in ruin dwell!

Thoughts in Past Years.

PETER HOWARD was the head-clerk in the large and flourishing establishment of Mr. Bradwell, who carried on the business of the cotton-trade in the town of Preston. For many years Peter had held his present situation; and, from long services and well-known integrity, was regarded by his master with great affection, who treated him on all occasions more as a friend than a dependant. About a year before the commence-

ment of our tale, Peter married the daughter of a farmer who lived in the neighbouring village of Mapletoft; and in Hannah Ford—such was his wife's maiden name—found an help meet for him. If Peter was pious towards God and just towards man, Hannah was no less so; and by her diligent attention to household-affairs, her good temper, and cheerful conversation, made for him a very happy home. At the time of which we write, she had lately presented Peter a son, now a fortnight old, and with the boy was, in common phrase, doing well.

On an evening at this period, while she was expecting her husband's return from his work, her neighbour Mrs. Dewis called to pay her respects, and to congratulate Hannah on the important event that had taken place. This lady, it may be observed, was in most points a very different person from Peter's wife. Her husband, who had been a small linen-draper in Preston, left her a widow, some few years before the time of which we write, with a very tolerable income for a person in her situation in life, which she spent in making herself comfortable, as she called it; that is, she expended it all upon herself. Mr. Dewis, when alive, had regularly attended the parish church, and, as he went to no other place of worship, was commonly considered to be a good Churchman. After his death, however, the widow, vexed at something said or done by the vicar, took leave of the Church, and joined the Methodists: here she remained for some time; when, on some annoyance from the preacher, she left that sect, and became a regular attendant at the Independent meeting-house. At this period politics ran very high in Preston; and as her new friends almost universally espoused the so-called Radical interest, Mrs. Dewis entered warmly into the question, and, by all means in her power, endeavoured to draw over others to that

party. Among those upon whom she made her attacks were the Howards, who, as being neither Radicals nor Dissenters, were in her opinion singularly benighted and ignorant beings, and ought, as she said, to be converted. In consequence of this, very little intimacy existed between the parties. Peter and Hannah had been brought up in strictly Church-principles, and regarded leaving the Church as one of the greatest sins a man could be guilty of, and one of the heaviest afflictions with which he could be visited. And as for politics, neither Peter nor his wife knew much about them, and thought that the less they attended to them the better. It was therefore with some degree of surprise that Hannah heard the little girl, who commonly waited upon her, announce, on the present occasion, the arrival of Mrs. Dewis. As soon as she was seated, the widow kindly remarked that Mrs. Howard was looking wonderfully well, and requested to see the little stranger: the child was accordingly brought out of his cradle, and did full justice to the high encomiums which were passed upon him. At this time Peter came in, having finished his work, and brought a kind message from Mrs. Bradwell, who, he said, had promised to call during the evening.

"Humph," said the widow, who did not like the Bradwells at all. Why this was the case, it is impossible to say,—perhaps because they were Church people, and not Radicals. "Humph," said the widow; "very nice people the Bradwells—very nice people indeed. But for all that, they've their faults as well as other folks. We've all our faults, Mr. Howard, eh! Well, well, it's a wicked world we live in; and I suppose the Bradwells are much as others are, although some people do speak so very well of them." Here she looked very significantly at Peter and his wife. "Well," she

added, smiling, "some folks know how to butter their bread.—And pray, what is the child to be called?"

"Henry," replied the father.

"Henry!" repeated the widow; "and why Henry?" Mrs. Dewis liked to have a reason for every thing. "Your name is Peter; why don't you call the boy Peter?"

"At first," replied Hannah, "we intended to call him Peter; but Mr. Bradwell has kindly consented to stand godfather to him; so, as his name is Henry, the boy is to be called Henry."

"And why," asked Mrs. Dewis, "do you have a godfather for him? If I had a child, I should not have a godfather for him; why should you have a godfather for your child?"

"Perhaps," replied Peter, "the easiest answer I can give to your question is, that the Church requires us to have a godfather for him; and what the Church requires, we think right to do."

"And why do you think it right to do what the Church tells you," persisted the widow. "I don't obey the Church; why should you?"

"Nay," said Peter, "do not ask me: "you know well that this is one of those points upon which we differ; so do not press me further on this head."

"Well," answered the widow, "I see you are too bigoted to reason with on these subjects: you sit listening to that vicar of yours so long, that I shall not be surprised, one of these days, if he tells you the moon is made of green cheese, you will believe it."

"There is little fear," replied Peter, good-humouredly; "the vicar will never tell us that."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Dewis; "one hears strange things in these days. But now you must inform me why you have asked Mr. Bradwell to be god-

father? I think I can guess. You expect a handsome present, I suppose."

"No, indeed," replied Peter, who for a moment felt extremely annoyed at this imputation; "the office of a godparent is far too responsible to be treated as a matter of traffic. Had we chosen Mr. Bradwell for the reason you suppose, I should feel that we were guilty of a species of simony, and could never expect the blessing of God upon such a transaction."

"I don't know much about simony," observed the widow; "but this I do know, that unless godfathers and godmothers are to give good handsome presents to the children, I do not exactly see of what use they are."

"Perhaps," said Peter, "when you have leisure, you will read over the Baptismal Service, as it stands in our Prayer-book; and then I think you will see that when godparents perform strictly that which they promise, they are of use to the children, and intended by the Church to bring far greater and more lasting benefit to those for whom they stand, than any presents of this world they could give them, however great they might be."

Peter said these words with great seriousness; and Mrs. Dewis, finding that she could make nothing of her bigoted neighbours, as she was accustomed to call them, took her leave. As soon as she was gone, Hannah remarked,—

"What a pity it is that the office of godparent is so much misunderstood! Really, to judge from what people commonly say, one would suppose that it was a mere idle form; and that all a person has to do, is to go to church with the child, make replies to the questions asked, and then the whole duty is performed."

"Such, indeed," replied Peter, "is, I fear, the

common impression with regard to this most responsible office ; and, alas, the usual way in which it is performed affords but too good reason for so very erroneous an impression. We, however, may bless God for providing our child with sponsors who, I feel sure, will not neglect what they have undertaken."

In the course of the evening, Mrs. Bradwell called, as she promised ; and finding Peter and his wife at tea, she sat down, and sent word to her husband where she was, requesting him to come, when his day's business was over, and escort her home.

As Mr. Bradwell will occupy a prominent part in the following pages, we must take this early opportunity of introducing him to our readers. Henry Bradwell was the only son of a surgeon and apothecary, in the town of Preston. When a child, his father intended that he should succeed to his practice, which, being very good, would have insured him a comfortable income. In these matters, parents' wishes are often doomed to disappointment, from the natural disinclinations of their children to follow the profession proposed to them. Such was the case in the present instance. Henry said that he had an unconquerable aversion to surgical operations, and to the smell of rhubarb, jalap, and other like unsavoury drugs : he would certainly enter his father's profession, if he really wished it, but would rather undertake anything else. The surgeon was much surprised at what he considered his son's want of taste, esteeming, as he did, the cutting off of legs and arms, and other matters of a like kind, among the sunny spots of life ; and hanging over the pots of rhubarb and jalap with much the same delight as some fair ladies do over odours of jasmine or rose. Being, however, a man of some skill in human nature, he very justly admitted that there was no accounting

for tastes; so one day he called his son to him, and said,

"Come, Master Harry, as you do not like doctoring, say what you do like, and I will endeavour to meet your wishes."

Henry replied at once, that he should like to have a cotton-mill.

"Well," said his father, "you have a strange taste indeed; but as you wish it, a cotton-mill, if possible, you shall have. And as you must learn the business, we will look out for some one who will take you as an apprentice, and teach you."

Accordingly Mr. Bradwell senior looked out, as he called it; and in due time Henry found himself settled in Messrs. Crofts' establishment, the largest manufacturers in the neighbouring town of Wigan. Here he was initiated into all the mysteries of the cotton-trade, and saw and heard things at different periods which made him think there were other trades quite as pleasant, although, perhaps, not so lucrative, as spinning and weaving; and convinced him there were modes of torturing humanity, besides cutting off people's legs and arms. While here, he made acquaintance with the curate of the parish, a Mr. Hulse, who at first appeared to him a great radical, and a wholesale censor of all cotton-lords, as he called them. In different conversations with this gentleman, he learned that the masters did not treat their men as they ought to do; that they made all out of them they could, and then cast them aside, like old worn-out engines, or superannuated race-horses; and at last turned them into the new patent safety pauper receptacles, where dyspepsia and obesity are set at defiance, and where each man is saved the trouble of acting upon a principle of responsibility, by being raised up in the scale of crea-

tion to something very nearly as high as a steam-engine, and being fed by weight, is allowed just so much as is sufficient to keep the boiler going.

"I don't understand all this," said Bradwell one day to his friend, when they were conversing on this topic.

"You will do in time," said Mr. Hulse. "Wait till the thousands come rolling in, and you have built yourself a palace, and stocked your cellar with champagne and hermitage, and bowl about in your carriage, with flunkeys, &c. to match,—wait till you do this, and you will then, at all events, understand one side of the picture, viz. that old worn-out servants and the poor are very troublesome customers, and that these patent houses are capital receptacles for them. Perhaps when you are rich, Bradwell," continued the curate, "you will give some poor hard-working parson, when he comes in behalf of the poor of his flock, a 5*l.*-note, that is, if you are quite sure of having fully enough for your luxuries, and that you give of that which costs you nothing. Bah!" he continued, "I am very wrong to put myself out as I do about these things; but I can't help it."

"Well," replied Bradwell, "we may see, on one of these fine days, when I'm a cotton-lord."

We shall pass over the time that elapsed until this consummation was effected. Suffice it to say, that Henry Bradwell conducted himself well during his apprenticeship; and on the death of his father, who left him a large sum of ready money, purchased a partnership in a house at Preston, to which place he removed on leaving the Messrs. Croft. In this situation he often thought of the conversations he had held with Mr. Hulse, and endeavoured to put into practice some of the plans suggested to him by that gentleman,

for the good of the workmen belonging to the establishment. Mr. Baker, however, the senior partner, did not like these plans.

"I don't understand them," he said; "moral and spiritual improvement, Church-teaching!—stuff, stuff, sir!—you're a young man, it won't do. I don't want to be bothered with all this care for our men; let them be paid their wages on the Saturday night, and leave them alone; I don't care what they do, as long as they don't burn down the mill, nor neglect their work. What does it matter to me how much they steal, so they don't steal from me; or drink, so they don't come drunk here? For my part, I think it's no business of mine to meddle with such things; and therefore I would rather that they should go on in the old way than we should interfere."

Once Bradwell suggested the propriety of setting apart some of the profits of the mill, that their workmen might be supplied with religious instruction. Mr. Baker's answer was characteristic.

"Sir," he said, "where there is a demand, there will always be a supply; when the people want spiritual food, they will advertise for it; plenty of persons will answer the call, and they will get what they want, on paying for it. By providing, as you term it, for the spiritual interests of the people, you destroy this arrangement; you over-glut the market with a commodity which is not wanted, and, by paying for it upon your plan, you have an inferior article. No, sir, let the thing take its own course; when they want preachers, they will go and hire them; when they want churches, they will form speculations and build them; and, by these means, they will have among them such men as they like,—good, extempore, popular preachers,—none of your humdrum fellows of the old school, who are fit

for nothing but to mumble away in an empty room, like a bee in a bottle."

As may easily be supposed from the foregoing remarks, it was useless attempting to do much with such a man as Mr. Baker; but after his death, which happened in the second year of Bradwell's partnership, then Henry determined that he would take the thing seriously in hand, and endeavour to work out among his people such a reformation as he wished to see. For this purpose he at once built a school-room, near the mill, for the children of his workmen, the management of which he committed to the vicar, Mr. Milles, and placed at his disposal 100*l.* per annum, as part salary for an additional curate, whose chief office should be to look after the work-people engaged in his establishment.

CHAPTER II.

Another Introduction.

Great joy was made that day of young and old,
And solemne feast proclaym'd throughout the land,
That their exceeding merth may not be told;
Suffice it heare by signes to understand
The usual joys at knitting of loves band.
Thrice happy man the knight himself did hold,
Possessed of his ladies hart and hand;
And ever when his eie did her behold,
His heart did seeme to melt in pleasures manifold.

SPENSER.

UP to the time of his partner's death, Henry Bradwell had remained unmarried; and it was generally supposed among the young ladies of Preston that he was not a marrying man. Since that event, however, there had arisen divers rumours in the town, which gradually

became more and more distinct, that he was not so impervious to female charms as had been represented; and at the time of which we write, it was confidently stated, that within a very short time there would be a Mrs. Bradwell. This rumour, unlike most rumours of a similar kind, was in fact true. Millicent Roberts was the only child of an attorney in Preston, who, some few years younger than Henry, was possessed of a very agreeable person, and a highly cultivated mind. Her father was—what some sceptical persons may be disposed to doubt—a thoroughly honest man; and, reader, let me tell you, there are honest lawyers, as well as honest men in other professions. Mr. Roberts was a thoroughly honest man and a good Christian; and had taught his daughter to walk in the same steps in which he trod. Living, as they did, within a few yards of the vicarage, they were very intimate with Mr. Milles; and Henry, who was also a constant visitor at the vicar's, had frequent opportunities there of studying the disposition, and of admiring the excellent qualities, of the lawyer's daughter. For a long period their acquaintance continued, without exciting in his mind any suspicion as to the state of his feelings towards her. He thought very little upon the subject of matrimony as applicable to himself; and had seen so many instances of misery arising from ill-sorted marriages, that the bias of his mind was towards a single life. A circumstance, however, at this time occurred, which opened his eyes a little to the state of his heart, and shewed him that, in reality, his feelings towards Miss Roberts were not of that indifferent nature which he had supposed them to be. A young man of large property had lately come to reside in the neighbourhood; and having appointed Mr. Roberts the agent of his estate, was frequently invited to his house. In these

visits Mr. Stanley—such was the gentleman's name—was much struck with the charms of his agent's daughter; and after much deliberation resolved to make her his wife, not supposing for a moment that she could possibly refuse what he considered so eligible a match. His attentions, which were but coldly received by Millicent, had the effect of making the young squire more persevering; and his frequent calls upon Mr. Roberts had been attributed, by the gossips of the place, not unjustly to the charms of his daughter, who was declared by them to be a very fortunate girl. Mr. Stanley's income began now to be the constant theme of the tea-party conversations in Preston: some, who were kindly disposed towards Millicent, doubled it, and declared that it was a good 10,000*l.* a year; those who disliked her halved it, and said that, to their certain knowledge, it was not 3000*l.* His character and person underwent the same scrutiny—some declaring that he was the best and handsomest man in the county; others asserting that he was dreadfully wild, anything but good-looking, and very disagreeable. The truth was, Mr. Stanley's income was about 5000*l.* a year; that he was tolerably good-looking, and not wilder than most young men are, who, brought up without a due regard to religion, are turned into the world at an early age with an independent fortune. As may be supposed, Mr. Stanley's frequent visits to the lawyer, and the surmises thereupon, did not escape the ears of Henry Bradwell; and although he could not exactly tell the cause at first, he did not much like what he heard. Some few days after these reports first reached him, Bradwell met the Roberts' at the vicarage; and during the evening discovered Millicent so very agreeable, that he said little to any one else. On taking leave of her at night, he

thought he had never seen her look so well ; and began to be somewhat convinced, that he was much more interested in his neighbour's suit than he had hitherto believed. He admitted, however, that whatever his feelings might be, the present was not the time to disclose them, and therefore resolved to await quietly the course of events ; and if Mr. Stanley was accepted, to keep his secret undivulged. A few weeks sufficed to set his mind at rest. Mr. Stanley proposed, and Mr. Stanley was rejected. Millicent had nothing to say against his fortune,—it was far greater than she expected to have ; nor against his station in life,—it was higher than her own ; she allowed that he was good-looking, and had a more polished manner than many of the young men whom she was in the habit of meeting at her father's house. Her decision, she told him, was formed upon other grounds. He demanded to know what they were. She hesitated at first ; but at last said, "I would fain have been spared this explanation, as what I have to say cannot but distress us both. It appears like an assumption of goodness on my own part which I do not possess, and a judicial opinion upon the character of another which I have no right to pass ; but as you insist upon my telling you what it is, I will do so. My refusal is founded upon religious grounds."

"In what way ?" asked Mr. Stanley.

"We are both Church people ; we both of us, I believe, entertain the same opinions ; and yet," replied Millicent, "there are things relating to religion which place an insurmountable barrier in the way of my becoming your wife."

"I don't understand you ; speak more plainly," demanded her lover. "Is it," he asked, "because I am not strict enough ?"

"I would have been spared further answer," re-

sponded the other; "but you insist upon it, and I will tell you plainly that it is."

Mr. Stanley attempted to turn her purpose, and to laugh it off, but she was inflexible. He then tried another plan, and would have persuaded her that time only was wanting to make him more strict; and that under her guidance he doubted not but he should become, as he termed it, a religious character:—all, however, was to no purpose.

"I am very weak and sinful myself," she said; "and I would have a husband who will assist me to walk answerably to my high and holy calling. I will never marry a man on a prospect of his becoming hereafter what he ought to be now. Your own good sense will tell you that there are many things you allow which are contrary to the strict, self-denying rules of the gospel; and which, in your present state of mind, would render you unfit to prove a good husband to a poor feeble girl like myself."

Mr. Stanley saw that any further attempts were vain, and at last took his leave; having learned a truth of which he before was doubtful, viz. that there are some women in the world who are guided in their choice of a husband by principle, and not by interest or mere passion. In a short time the ladies of Preston, old and young, discovered that Mr. Stanley had discontinued his visits at Mr. Roberts's house; and here a fresh source of conjecture was opened. Some said that he had been disappointed in her fortune; others, that his friends had persuaded him not to make what they considered a low connexion; others, that he was disgusted with the old man; and some, that he had found out what was clear to all—that she was playing a deep game, and wished to have two strings to her bow, (coupling his with Bradwell's name,) that if one failed, she might take the other.

One old lady alone appeared to see more clearly into the truth of the matter, when she said that, let people say what they would, she really believed that Millicent Roberts was a good girl; and if Mr. Stanley had proposed, she had rejected him because he was not as steady and religious as she would like her husband to be. This opinion was much laughed at by most; who said that if Millicent had refused Mr. Stanley, she had acted like a fool.

“Eh dear,” said Mrs. Marles, one of the party; “and, pray, who is this Miss Millicent, to give herself such airs as these? I’m sure Mr. Stanley is good enough for her, any day; and if she fancies she is to play such a game as this, she will find herself much mistaken, and discover, when it is too late, that she has outstood her market.”

These reports in due time found their way to the ears of Mr. Bradwell, who made no comment upon them; but suspecting the case to be as it was, became more attached to Millicent than he was before. Some few weeks after the rejection of Mr. Stanley, he learned from Mr. Milles the truth of the matter; and on this occasion disclosed to his friend the state of his own affections, and his determination to make trial, whether he could not succeed better than the last suitor. This determination was strongly approved of by the vicar, who gave him good hopes of success.

“Had you to deal with an ordinary person,” said Mr. Milles, “such as worldly-minded girls commonly are, I should hesitate long before I persuaded you to engage in a suit wherein such a man as Mr. Stanley had failed; for it must be admitted that, as far as worldly matters are concerned, he has several advantages over you, such as would induce many girls to decide in his favour; but Millicent Roberts is no ordinary person,

—she has a well-regulated religious mind, and in her choice of a husband will, I feel sure, be influenced by other motives than those of this world. She will never marry the man she does not love; but I am convinced she will never love the man she cannot respect.—You have been very quiet about this affair,” slyly added Mr. Milles; “and I dare say fancied that you were making a disclosure of a secret, in telling me the state of your heart; but I have seen several of these matters during my life, and have been long aware of what perhaps you were scarcely conscious of yourself. Nay, nay, don’t blush; I am not now about to be father confessor to you; and I only speak of it to inform you that I have seen sundry symptoms in the young lady which give me good hopes that you will not suffer a refusal.”

Henry Bradwell left his friend well satisfied with the information he had received, and glad to find that Mr. Milles entirely approved of his choice. On the following morning he was closeted for a long time with Mr. Roberts in his private apartment; after which, he was introduced by him into the breakfast-room, where Millicent was sitting alone.

“I have brought you, my dear,” said the father, “a nervous young gentleman, who has come this morning with an important petition, in which you are somewhat concerned. Perhaps,” continued he, smiling, “it will be as well that he should state himself what it is; I shall therefore leave you, merely saying, that he has my full permission to make his request, and my best wishes for his success.”

Millicent saw at once what the nature of the request was, which, with much stammering and circumlocution, was made and granted.

In due time, the old ladies of Preston again exercised their conjectures upon the rumours that were

abroad, which were all dissipated one fine morning in June, by a merry peal of bells from the old church-tower, which announced the marriage of Henry Bradwell and Millicent Roberts.

CHAPTER III.

Almsgiving.

Eleemosyna prodest homini in vitâ, in morte, et post mortem.

ST. AUGUSTINE.

For only love of God, more Christianlike to live,
And for a zeal to help the poor, thine almës daily give.
Let gift no glory look, nor evil possess thy mind;
And for a truth these profits 3 through almës shalt thou find:
1. First, here the Holy Ghost shall daily, through his grace,
Provoke thee to repentant life, God's mercy to embrace.
2. Of goods and friends (by death) when thou thy leave must take,
Thine almës-deeds shall clasp thy soul, and never it forsake.
3. When God shall after death call soon for thine account,
Thine almës then, through faith in Christ, shall all things else
surmount.

But yet for any deed, put thou no trust therein;
But put thy trust in God (through Christ) to pardon thee thy sin.
For else as cackling hen with noise betrays her nest,
Even so go thou and blase thy deeds, and lose thou all the rest.

TUSSER.

It would be well for all newly married people if they commenced the management of their households in the same way as Mr. and Mrs. Bradwell. Every thing was done on strict religious principles; and as in other matters of greater moment, so in their choice of servants, and purchases of furniture, they resolved to be guided by the same rules which directed their conduct in other things.

"It is not seemly," said Millicent to her husband, "that we should follow the custom which is so prevalent in this neighbourhood, and purchase furniture

which is perhaps very proper for a nobleman's house, but is very unbecoming in that of a tradesman: we will, if you have no objection, confine ourselves strictly to such things as are proper for persons in our station of life."

In this her husband fully concurred; and in consequence their new residence was furnished in a plain, but neat and substantial way. This, of course, in a short time became the theme of conversation in the Preston tea-parties, where it was commented upon in different ways. One old lady, Mrs. Fretful, set it down to poverty; another to eccentricity; and a third, Mrs. Marles, who professed to be a great friend of the Roberts family, and was considered to be knowing in such matters, being the third cousin of a newly-created baronet, declared that it was a mark of such shocking ignorance, that she would call upon her dear friend, as she termed her, and tell her she was the talk of the whole town. This resolution was warmly applauded by the rest of the company present; and Mrs. Marles was accordingly entreated to take the earliest opportunity of seeing Mrs. Bradwell on the subject.

On the following morning Millicent was sitting alone shortly after breakfast, when Mrs. Marles was announced. Millicent had frequently received tokens of her neighbour's expressions of kindness, and was not therefore at all surprised at the affectionate way in which Mrs. Marles rushed across the room and embraced her.

"My dear friend," she exclaimed, "I am so delighted to see you, and you are looking so well! How is dear Mr. Bradwell?"

Millicent replied that she was thankful to say that he was quite well, but much engaged at present; as, in addition to the labours which his own business entailed

upon him, he was occupied in superintending the building of a new school at the extremity of the parish.

"Good man," exclaimed Mr. Marles, "good, dear man! I am sure he deserves the thanks of the whole town for the trouble he takes with the poor: but really, my dear Mrs. Bradwell, you should not allow him to do so much; he will injure his health; and I am sure it must cost him a great deal of money to be always giving so much to schools, and churches, and such things. I wonder he does not leave it to Mr. Milles, whose business it is, you know, to take care of the poor, and to build churches and schools. For my part, I don't see what else the clergymen have to do."

"I think," replied Millicent, "that you would hardly speak thus if you knew how fully Mr. Milles' time is taken up with the labours of his profession; besides, I scarcely imagine that it is the clergyman's duty to attend so entirely to the wants of the poor, and to the building churches and schools, as to leave none of these things to be done by the laity. You will doubtless remember that in the earliest days of Christianity the apostles appointed certain persons to manage the distribution of the funds which were given to the Church, that they might not be interrupted in their more spiritual employment, and thereby might be able 'to give themselves up continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.' Now I have often heard Mr. Milles say, that one of the reasons which prevent clergymen having the daily service in their churches is, they are so much engaged in the way of 'serving tables,' that they have not time nor strength to pray and minister in the church as much as they ought to do."

"For all that," answered Mrs. Marles, "I am sure it is a very hard thing that the laity should be obliged

to do these things ; and I think it much better that the clergy should be employed in serving tables, as you call it, than in having daily service."

"Nay," answered Millicent, "do not say I call it 'serving tables'—the apostles call it so; and, if I may be pardoned for warning you, it would be that you should take care what you say, when you are expressing an opinion different from that of the holy apostles."

"But do you not think," asked her neighbour, "that it is really a very hard thing upon the laity that they should be obliged to spend their money, and give up their time to these things?"

"No, indeed I do not," answered Mrs. Bradwell; "I think it a very great privilege that they are allowed the opportunity of consecrating their time and money in such a way to the service of Almighty God."

"And so, I suppose," resumed Mrs. Marles, "that you would rather give your money to such things than make yourself comfortable, and live as other people do."

"As to that," replied Millicent, "I imagine that the highest privilege we are allowed with regard to our wealth is, to lay it out in works of charity and mercy, thus giving it to God. But I will not venture to say that we are obliged to do this so entirely as to bring ourselves to the state in which those are whom we relieve; for this would incapacitate us from doing any further good, and would remove us from the position in which we are placed. I think, however, that we are bound to undergo very great self-denials, if by them we can further the glory of God, and increase the welfare of our fellow-men."

"But don't you think," asked Mrs. Marles, "that we may live comfortably, just as other people do?"

"It is so very difficult," replied Millicent, "to an-

swer a question wherein the terms are so indefinite, that you must excuse me for declining to say what I think upon the subject."

"Ah, now I have you!" triumphantly exclaimed her interrogator; "you *must* admit that we ought to live as others do; and now I know you will allow me to take the liberty of an old friend,—one who has seen a great deal of the world, and whose opinion may therefore, I trust, be relied upon,—you must allow me, I say, my dear Mrs. Bradwell, to speak to you on a matter which has excited the surprise of the whole town; I mean, the very extraordinary way in which you have furnished your house."

Millicent was a good-tempered, and, as we have said, a high-principled woman, and therefore immediately suppressed the feelings of anger which arose in her mind at this act of impertinence. She hesitated for a moment, and then smiling, asked quietly, what there was about the furniture which appeared so very extraordinary as to excite the attention of the whole town.

"I can assure you," she added, "that Mr. Bradwell selected it, as being tidy and good, and fitting for our station in life; and I must confess that I have bad taste enough in these matters to be fully satisfied with his choice."

When it came to particulars, Mrs. Marles found it no easy matter to make good her complaint. Every thing was strictly clean, and, for plain furniture, very proper. She therefore said that it was difficult to point out exactly where the fault lay; but the whole affair was really very unfashionable, and not fit for a person in society in these days.

"My dearest friend," said the widow, in a commiserating tone, "it wants an air about it; a few easy

chairs and ottomans, and small tables with a French cloth, and nic-nacs,—these would make it tolerable; as it is, it is very bad. Dear me, you should see the rooms in my cousin Sir Toby's house!"

"Perhaps," added Millicent, drily, "if Mr. Bradwell was Sir Toby, he would furnish differently; as it is, we are content with the furniture we have."

"Well," said Mrs. Marles, "all I can say is, that it is not at all the thing."

"What thing?" asked Millicent, smiling.

"It's not proper," replied her visitor, rather angrily—"it is poor and paltry; and I'm sure if I'd a husband, I'd take very good care that he should not serve me in such a shabby way."

"Pray, Mrs. Marles," said Millicent, "do allow me to undeceive you, if you imagine that I'm not perfectly satisfied with the plain furniture you see around you."

"Ah, indeed!" replied the widow, "I see that you are very far gone."

"Where to?" asked Millicent, quietly; when just at this moment Mr. Milles was announced, which prevented the widow's answer; for knowing she should find no sympathy in the vicar, she did not wish that he should take part in the conversation in which they were engaged; rising, therefore, from her seat, and shaking her head at Millicent in a pitying way, she left the room. In a few minutes after, Bradwell came in, highly delighted with the success which had attended him in his morning's labour in behalf of a school they were about to build in a distant part of the parish.

"Well, Vicar," he exclaimed, as soon as he was seated, "what success do you think I have met with to-day?"

The vicar said that it was impossible to say; but

from the symptoms of joy apparent in his countenance, he imagined that his success had been great.

"It has indeed been great," replied Henry; "and not the less am I pleased, that it has come from a source upon which I did not calculate. You know old Roger Neale, who lives at Thornville?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Milles, "I know him, but not very intimately, as he does not belong to my parish, and, like myself, visits, I believe, but very seldom."

"You know also what people say of him?" continued Bradwell.

"I certainly do," replied the vicar; "although I cannot say that I pay much attention to any of the reports which are current about my neighbours; and especially where they are, as in this instance, against them, and which, with regard to Mr. Neale, I know to be false."

"Well," resumed Henry, "I acted less properly in this case than you; for I have heard so often of Mr. Neale's stinginess and covetousness, that I must say I partially believed it; and when I called this morning to ask whether he would assist us in building the school, had little expectation of obtaining more than a few shillings, or a sovereign at most."

"And pray," asked the vicar, "what did you get?"

"So much," answered Bradwell, "that we need now be under no further apprehensions of raising funds enough for our purpose. When I was admitted to the room where the old man was sitting, he received me very courteously; and having learned the purpose for which I had called, requested to know, before he entered further into the subject, whether the school was to be built with the vicar's approbation, and if it was to be placed under your entire management. 'I always ask this question,' he observed, 'because I am

fully resolved never to subscribe one farthing towards any school which is not to be placed under the care of the clergyman of the parish. The clergyman,' he added, 'ought to feed Christ's lambs as well as his sheep; and I will never lend my assistance to dissolve in any way the bond which should exist between them.' In answer to this, I shewed him exactly what your wishes and plans are; and told him that I was acting entirely under you in the business, and had undertaken the office of soliciting subscriptions to spare you the necessity of doing it, which I thought was a service that ought not to be forced upon a priest. 'You are quite right, sir,' replied Mr. Neale; 'I am glad to hear you say what you do; it is certainly the duty of us laymen to take these things off the shoulders of our clergymen, that they may attend with less distraction to the more sacred parts of their holy calling.'"

"Well," said the vicar, smiling, "and what was the result of this conversation?"

"He gave me a cheque for 100*l.*," replied Bradwell; "and told me if that was not enough, he would contribute a second donation; he has also requested that he may be considered an annual subscriber of 10*l.* to the funds of the school, but that his name must not appear in any subscription-list."

The vicar expressed himself much pleased at this announcement, although he said he was not surprised at it, being aware of very many similar instances of Mr. Neale's unostentatious liberality. After some further conversation, Mr. Milles took his leave; and then Millicent recounted to her husband the remarks made by Mrs. Marles. When she had finished, Henry smiled at the old lady's anxiety in their behalf, and mildly remarked, "Well, my dear, we can easily afford to suffer the foolish imputations of these people, as long as we do

what we know to be our duty. By furnishing our house in the plain way in which we have done, we shall be enabled to contribute upwards of 200*l.* to the school we are building, besides the other sum which we have put into the vicar's hands towards enlarging the church; and I doubt not but that we shall experience far more solid satisfaction from laying out our money in this way, than if we had purchased the rich furniture which our neighbour-gossips would have had us to do."

CHAPTER IV.

The Baptism.

In due time

A day of solemn ceremonial comes;
 When they, who for this minor hold in trust
 Rights that transcend the humblest heritage
 Of mere humanity, present their charge,
 For this occasion daintily adorned,
 At the baptismal font. And when the pure
 And consecrating element hath cleansed
 The original stain, the child is there received
 Into the second ark, Christ's Church, with trust
 That he, from wrath redeemed, therein shall float,
 Over the billows of this troublesome world,
 To the fair land of everlasting life.
 Corrupt affections, covetous desires,
 Are all renounced; high as the thought of man
 Can carry virtue, virtue is professed;
 A dedication made, a promise given
 For due provision to control and guide,
 And unremitting progress to insure
 In holiness and truth.

WORDSWORTH.

BRADWELL had been married six years, and was still without a child, when the circumstances occurred which we narrated in the first chapter of our tale. Peter Howard, as we there said, was a long-tried servant,

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having been employed in the establishment before Bradwell became a partner; and from uniform good conduct was a great favourite with his master. When, therefore, Bradwell heard the request, that he would stand sponsor to his child, his first impression was, that he would oblige his old servant, and do so; his second impression was less positive; and a third, that he would postpone giving an answer until he had consulted the vicar on the subject. To the vicar accordingly he went, as soon as the day's business was over, and stated to him what had occurred.

"I come to you now, Vicar," said Bradwell, "because I have heard you frequently say, that it is your opinion that single persons should undertake the office of godparents, in preference to the married."

"Such," replied Mr. Milles, "is certainly my opinion; but circumstances may exist which render it desirable that married persons should not refuse this office, if pressed upon them; and this I conceive to be the case in the present instance. Peter Howard is an old faithful servant; and your feelings towards him are such, that if he dies first, you will take his family and provide for them, fulfilling, as far as you can, a father's duty to them. This being the case, I should say, that even if you had children of your own, you ought not to refuse Peter's request; as, in case of his death, your office of godfather will give you authority over this child which mere feeding and clothing would not otherwise afford you; and if he lives, why then, of course, you will have very little anxiety in the matter, as Peter Howard is not a man to neglect the education of his child; but you must remember that you are childless, so, at all events, there are no objections at present to your undertaking this office."

In consequence of this advice, Bradwell gave his

consent, as before mentioned, much to the delight of all the parties concerned; and preparations were immediately made for the christening, in order that it might take place on the following Sunday. In due time the day arrived, and after the second lesson in the afternoon-service (for Mr. Milles was particular in observing the rubrics), Bradwell, with the other sponsors, together with the father and nurse, went to the font, where the child of wrath became, as our catechism expresses it, "a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;" and received the name Henry, whereby he was to be known among the followers of the cross.

Mrs. Dewis was present during the service, and said afterwards, that it was a very pretty sight, but she did not like it; she thought it very popish to sign the child with the sign of the cross, as if there could be any good in that; "besides," she added, "the vicar said that the child was regenerated, and thanked God for it; and I should like to know how he can tell this—very likely indeed! For my part, I don't believe it; and if I did believe it, I should never like the service, it is so long; but that's its least fault."

We will leave Mrs. Dewis to tell her tale of disapprobations to her neighbour Sally Brown, as they are walking home,—for Sally, although a rigid dissenter, had gone to church that day, just, as she said, to see the ceremony,—and turn to some others that were present.

Millicent Bradwell was there, and felt what a blessed privilege it was to be a Christian mother, and be allowed to bring little ones to Christ, that He should touch them. Earnestly and fervently did she enter into the beautiful service of our Church on this occasion, and sent up her thanksgivings to God, with those of the worshippers around her, for the benefits He had granted, and prayed

that the young Christian might lead the rest of his life "according to this beginning." Peter's emotions it is impossible to describe: in bringing his child to holy baptism, and placing him in covenant with God, he felt that he had been instrumental to the removal of the stain of original sin, which all the children of Adam bring with them into the world, and that, by God's grace, another heir of salvation had been added to the Church. Bradwell was not much less affected: he was aware that he had undertaken a most responsible office, for the due discharge of which he should one day have to give an account. He listened with great attention to the exhortation made by the vicar to the godparents; and silently and fervently prayed, that he might be enabled to fulfil faithfully the duties he had promised to perform.

After the service, the party adjourned to Mr. Bradwell's house, who provided the christening dinner,—a practice which, on these and similar occasions, he always observed towards his workmen. At such times the vicar was generally present; and by his well-timed remarks contrived to make these meetings, which are too often scenes of intemperance, occasions of benefit to all present. Besides this, they were means of promoting those feelings of kindness which should always subsist between a master and his servants, and of persuading the parties present rightly to appreciate the ordinances of the Church.



CHAPTER V.

An Accident and Death.

What if some little pain the passage have,
That makes frayle flesh to fear the bitter wave ;
Is not short payne well borne, that bringes long ease,
And layes the soul to sleep in quiet grave ?
Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
Ease after warre, death after life, does greatly please.

SPENSER.

FOR three years nothing very important happened to the parties with whom our narrative is concerned. Bradwell and his wife continued to walk in the same unobtrusive path of virtue, gaining greater love from all as they were better known. Peter and his wife remained without more children ; and the boy Henry was growing up a fat chubby-faced lad, full of all sorts of childish fun and mischief. At this period, however, an event happened which threw a dark cloud over the parties, and had a very important influence upon Henry Howard's future prospects in life. His father, one part of whose office it was to see that all the machinery in the mill was in right order, had gone one day into a room where some of the wheels were disarranged, and in approaching the part that was out of place, his dress caught ; and before he could extricate himself, or assistance be afforded him, was so involved in the machinery, that he received some very dangerous injuries. As soon as Mr. Bradwell heard of the accident, he went immediately to Peter's house, whither the sufferer had been removed ; and found, to his grief, that the wounds were of a very serious nature, and that in all probability one of his legs would have to be amputated. On the second

day after the accident. Mr. Hornby the surgeon declared that this must be done, as the only means of saving his life, which, indeed, he observed, under any circumstances, was in a most perilous state. Bradwell broke this intelligence to Peter, who received the news with calm submission.

"I am," said he, "in the hands of an all-merciful God; let Him do with me as seemeth Him best. I have only one request to make before the operation takes place, which is, that I may be allowed to see Mr. Milles, and pray with him, and, if the medical men will permit, partake with him of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I may die, sir," he added, "under this operation; and if so, would wish to hallow my last moments by feeding on the bread of life, which if any man eat, he shall live for ever."

The surgeons at first remonstrated against this part of Peter's request, under a fear that it might be attended with excitement, and unfit him for the operation he had to undergo; but, upon further consideration, perceiving his mind bent upon it, they thought better to consent.

Mr. Milles was accordingly admitted to the sick man's room, where, after some previous conversation and prayer, he administered the holy Communion to the party present, consisting of the sufferer, his wife, who, it is needless to say, was deeply affected, and Mr. Bradwell. When the service was concluded, Peter expressed himself prepared for the operation, and the surgeons were admitted. Poor Hannah, who had with difficulty borne up under the previous trials, was totally overcome when she saw the persons approach, upon whose skill, humanly speaking, hung her husband's life; drawing one long deep sigh, she would have fallen to the ground, had not Bradwell caught her in his arms, who, at Peter's request, removed her from the room in a state

of insensibility. As soon as the preparations were made, Peter was placed in a fit situation, and submitted to the operation without a murmur. He experienced great pain, indeed, as he afterwards confessed to Mr. Milles; but he felt that he was under the kind providence of an all-merciful God, and that he ought not to repine at any of His dispensations. Under a sense of this, he acquiesced in the divine will, and was supported during the trial in a wonderful way, which he could not explain.

For some days favourable symptoms ensued; and the surgeons gave hopes, that by the vigour of a constitution which was naturally strong, and unimpaired by riot or excess, he would ultimately recover. During this time Peter was scarcely ever heard to express a hope or a fear as to his life. "I am perhaps wrong for thinking as I do of my recovery," was his remark one day to the vicar; "I ought probably to wish to live, if not to perfect my repentance,—for, alas, I know how deeply I have transgressed God's laws,—at least for the sake of my wife and child; but somehow or other, though I do not dare to wish to die, I cannot venture to wish to live; I feel so sure that almighty God knows what is best for me, that I would rather neither hope nor fear on the subject. I have trusted my soul with Him, who has purchased it with His own blood. I have committed my wife and child to Him who is a Father of the fatherless, and the God of the widow. May He do with me and with them as He sees best."

On the eighth day the favourable symptoms ceased, and the medical attendant began to entertain fears that Peter might not recover. The next day he was worse; and a few days more confirmed the truth that mortification had already begun, and that the sufferer had not long to live. These tidings were conveyed to

the sick man by Mr. Milles, and were heard with the same composure as he had received intelligence of the operation. He requested the vicar to prepare his wife for the event; and as soon as she was able to bear it, to bring her to the apartment in which he was. Hannah's faith was less strong than that of her husband's; and although she had from the first entertained very great doubts as to his recovery, yet, when the full truth broke upon her, she received it as she would have done her own death-warrant: she neither moved nor spoke, but stood gazing upon the vicar with a wild piercing look, apparently lost in unconsciousness; for some time she remained in this attitude, and when conducted by Mr. Milles to a chair, sat down to all appearance bereft of her senses. The vicar, much affected, remained silent, waiting the time when she would return to a state of consciousness, almost fearing that the shock had been too great for her.

At length, however, she gradually regained her thoughts; and as she became aware of her situation, burst into a flood of tears. Mr. Milles had looked anxiously for this, knowing that such outward demonstration of grief is far less to be dreaded than the silent unseen woe which preys inwardly, and feeds, as it were, upon the very fountain of sense, depriving its victim of reason, and often of life. After a pause of some minutes, he broke silence, by urging upon her the duty of submission, and encouraging her with the consolations of religion. The trial was great; but at length she was enabled to assent to the truth of the vicar's remarks, and promised that she would strive to submit. At this point Mr. Milles requested her to seek with him in prayer that strength which in this hour of need she so greatly required, to enable her to do that which she admitted to be right; and as in all cases where

humble prayer is resorted to, a blessing attends our petition, so, in the present instance, God was pleased to look down upon His heart-stricken servant, and to grant their requests. As soon as they rose from their knees, she requested to see her husband, and in a few minutes was at his bed-side, endeavouring to preserve that calmness of mind which he intreated her to keep.

It will be needless to go through the whole afflicting scene which followed ; poor Peter lingered for four days more, without a hope of recovery, although apparently without pain. During this time the vicar and Mr. Bradwell were in constant attendance, endeavouring to console his dying hours. Just before his death he begged to be left alone for a short time with Mr. Milles, when, after recounting to him all the sins he could remember to have committed against God and man, and expressing his sincere repentance for having so far fallen from baptismal purity, and his firm but humble trust in his Saviour's merits, he requested the vicar to absolve him, which he did in the striking words of our Church, as given in the service for the Visitation of the Sick. After this, his wife and friend were admitted ; and in a few minutes he breathed his last, pouring forth his soul in the few but expressive words of the first martyr, St. Stephen, " Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."



CHAPTER VI.

The Widow.

But for her babe,
And for her little orphan boy, she said,
She had no wish to live,—that she must die
Of sorrow.

WORDSWORTH.

ON the day after the funeral Mr. Bradwell called upon the widow, and examined into the state of her pecuniary affairs, which she had requested him to do. On inquiry, it was found that Peter, after his few and trifling debts were paid, had left property to the amount of about 200*l.*, the whole of which he had received upon the death of an uncle.

“You are surprised, sir, I dare say,” said the widow, with tears in her eyes, “that my poor husband has left so small a sum,—for indeed you were always a good master to him, and he spent little upon himself; but now that he is dead and gone, I may mention what he kept secret even from you, who knew almost all his thoughts,—the greater portion of his savings was spent in charity; a certain sum out of his weekly earnings—a tenth of them at first, afterwards more—he took to church on the Sunday and presented at the offertory, which he ever considered the most proper way of giving alms: other sums were devoted by him to the Sunday-school, and different institutions in the town; but always secretly, so that no one knew how much or to what objects he gave. He said that he did not like the way in which money was generally collected for charity; and he thought when people put down their names in subscription-lists, or gave it in such a

way as to let the world know of it, that they did not act according to our blessed Lord's advice, where He says, 'Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.'"

"Poor fellow!" said Bradwell, with moistened eyes, "I knew that he gave much away, having accidentally become acquainted with objects whom he had relieved in the secret manner you mention; but I was not aware that he had acted in this matter to the extent which it appears he did. But now, Hannah, tell me, what are your future plans; for I fear you will scarcely be able to manage a livelihood upon the small property which has fallen to you."

Hannah said that she had thought much upon this, and, after long deliberation, had come to the conclusion that her best plan would be, to hire a small house in the suburbs of the town, where she might increase her income by taking in a few scholars. With this, in addition to the little property she possessed, she hoped to be able to procure enough to live upon. Bradwell said that he should wish to see her again before she made any definite arrangements; and then taking leave, went to the vicarage to consult with his friend as to the way in which he could best assist the widow and her fatherless son.

Her visitor had been gone but a short time, and Hannah had just replaced the documents, which she had taken from her desk, when Susan Dewis made her appearance,—dropped in, she said, to pay her respects after the late loss her neighbour had sustained.

"Ah, poor Peter!" she began, "he is a sad loss to us, but especially to you, Mrs. Howard."

"Yes," replied the widow; "a loss, Mrs. Dewis, which in this world I shall never recover."

"Very true, very true," returned Mrs. Dewis; "a home looks dreary without a husband; and one feels very lonely for some time after he is gone. I remember well that I missed poor Dewis very much indeed for many months; but, some how or other, time accustoms one to it, and I find now that I get on very well by myself. Dewis, you know, was a good man while he lived; but I can assure you he gave me a great deal of trouble in many different ways; he was so particular, too, about his money, that I could not spend scarcely a farthing a month on any thing, except just what we were positively obliged to buy; but that, I think, has been very much your case, has it not?"

"No, indeed," replied Hannah, the tears starting in her eyes at the recollection of Peter's uniform kindness towards her in all things; "no, indeed, Mrs. Dewis, poor Peter allowed me to do much as I pleased with regard to money; but the truth is, we neither of us had very extravagant habits, so perhaps appeared to be more saving than we really were."

"Well," said Mrs. Dewis, "if you spent little, all the better for you now. I'm sure I've found it so; for ever since Dewis died, I have been able to live much more comfortably than I did before. I used to toil and labour like a horse to have all things tidy and straight; and now, as you know, I live like a lady, and keep my servant girl, who does all the work of the house, so that I never bother myself about any thing. No, no; I'm thankful to say that I have quite enough to live upon—thanks to poor Dewis's saving ways. I always buy the best, and have plenty of money to go out when and where I like; and never deny myself in any one single way,—no, nor never will, as long as I can help it. And this, I suppose, will be the case with you now,

Mrs. Howard, as Peter has of course left you a good round sum?"

The poor widow, who felt almost overcome at the cool way her neighbour talked upon a subject which, when alone, she at times scarcely dared to think of, replied, that she had formed no fixed resolutions respecting her future mode of living; but her present intention was, to go on as economically as possible.

"Well, for my part," returned the other, "if I were you, I should do no such thing: you have had labour and toil enough; take my advice, and make the most of your money. I'll be bound to say, you have plenty now to live upon very comfortably; and might rent a nice little house, as I have done, and hire a good stout girl, like my Jenny, to do all the household-work."

To this Hannah made no answer; and after a short silence, Mrs. Dewis, who began to suspect that her company was not at the present time very acceptable, and moreover discovered that no information as to her future plans was to be got out of her neighbour,—which, indeed, had been the real object of her visit,—rose up to go, lamenting that she could not stay longer, as she had a similar mournful call to pay at Sarah Allen's, who, two days since, had lost her only child.

During the time of the above conversation, Bradwell had been closeted with the vicar in his study; when it was agreed upon between them that a small house should be hired for the widow on the outskirts of the town; and that Bradwell should allow her a certain weekly sum, which, together with what she possessed, would be sufficient for her maintenance until Henry was old enough to enter the mill, when, if his wishes turned that way, he was to be placed in a situation where he might procure his own livelihood. To this plan Hannah thankfully

consented ; a small cottage was accordingly found, which Mrs. Bradwell furnished ; and here, in a short time, the widow and her child took up their abode. For some weeks it appeared very doubtful whether Hannah would recover the blow she had sustained ; day after day she might have been seen with the child in her arms, leaning over the gate which led to the town, apparently engaged in deep and melancholy thought, from which she was scarcely aroused even by the approach of Mr. Milles or the Bradwells, from one or other of whom she received an almost daily visit. At length faith got the mastery ; and she was enabled to look upon her bereavement more calmly, and to see in it the hand of God, who corrects not but “ for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.”

“ I know,” she said one day, speaking to the vicar on her grief—“ I know that it is very wicked in me to repine, and that nothing but selfish feelings would urge me to wish to have my husband back again ; nor, indeed, much as I suffer from his loss, do I think that I could consent to such a thing, were it possible ;—but I am so weak in Christian faith, and the blow fell upon me so unprepared to receive it, that I am not surprised I take it as ill as I do. God, however, is all-merciful ; and He who enables the shorn lamb to bear the blast is enabling me to bear my trial, sore though it be.”

It was soon apparent to her friends, that although she was becoming more and more calm and resigned, her constitution was sinking under the struggle ; and that unless something was done to rouse her from the listless state into which she was falling, she would not recover. Mr. Hornby was accordingly consulted on the subject, who recommended a temporary sojourn at the sea-side, as he said a removal from the scene in which her griefs had happened would be most likely

to divert her mind, and the sea-breezes might tend to the re-establishment of her health. In a few days, therefore, she was removed to Blackpool, a well-known sea-bathing town a few miles distant from Preston. At first the change of air and scene appeared to have a beneficial effect upon the invalid's health ; and, from the accounts sent to her friends, it was hoped by them that she would recover. A few weeks dispelled such expectations ; and upon finding herself growing gradually weaker, she wrote to Mr. Bradwell, stating that it was her wish to return home as soon as possible.

" I have many reasons," she said, " why I desire to leave this place. First, I am now so ill that I do not think I have long to live ; and in case of death, should wish to be buried by the side of my departed husband. Again, I am here deprived of the means of grace which I enjoyed at Preston ; we have no daily service and no weekly communion—a loss which, under my present circumstances, and in my weak and low state, I feel very keenly ; I also miss very much the society of yourselves and Mr. Milles. Many other reasons I might give, but trust these are enough to convince you that it is not a mere wayward fancy which makes me anxious to return."

In a week after the receipt of the above letter, the invalid returned to her cottage, where for some months she continued much in the same state in which she was before going to Blackpool. Her chief delight appeared to be in nursing her child, who was growing up a strong healthy boy ; and in acts of devotion, in which she was now constantly engaged. Her health, however, was by degrees failing, and her constitution gradually sinking, although the decline was scarcely perceptible even to those who knew her best. After a time she was unable to walk as far as the church, and in a few days

more was confined to her bed. Here she lingered for many weeks, suffering greatly, but without a murmur, blessing God for all the mercies He had shed upon her, and looking forward with humble hope to a reunion with him who she felt was among the blest, and who, as he had been her comfort and stay, next to God, on earth, supplied her, now that he was gone, with an additional ground for longing to depart, and to be with Christ.

At length the time of her departure came ; it was not expected so soon, and no one was with her at the moment ; but in the morning, when the girl, who had been appointed by Mr. Bradwell to look after her, went into the bed-room, she found her dead, and the child sleeping quietly upon her breast. Her gentle spirit appeared to have winged its flight without a struggle ; as, in spite of the glazed eye and open mouth which ever attend upon death, a placid smile seemed still to linger about her features, as though it would tell her last moments on earth were peace.

The funeral was conducted respectably, but without ostentation ; and, according to her own request, she was laid in the same grave with her husband. Thus, as they "were lovely and pleasant in their lives, in their death they were not divided."

As soon as the news of Hannah's death was carried to Bradwell's house, Millicent went down to the cottage, and brought back the orphan, whom she and her husband had resolved to educate, when they were first aware that all hopes of the widow's recovery were gone. A nurse was accordingly hired to take care of him ; and in due time young Henry was regularly domesticated as a part of Mr. Bradwell's family.

CHAPTER VII.

The Confirmation.

And oft as sin and sorrow tire,
The hallow'd hour do Thou renew,
When beckon'd up the awful choir
By pastoral hands, toward Thee we drew.

When trembling at the sacred rail
We hid our eyes and held our breath,
Felt Thee how strong, our hearts how frail,
And long'd to own Thee to the death.

For ever on our souls be traced
That blessing dear, that dove-like hand,
A sheltering rock in memory's waste,
O'ershadowing all the weary land.

Christian Year.

FOR several years Henry's life was without other incidents than those which commonly befall boys in their youthful days. He was carefully educated by the Bradwells, who, from the time when he first began to understand any thing, endeavoured on all occasions to instil right principles, correctly believing that a child's mind is never too young to receive impressions, and that every impression has an influence more or less upon the future character. The consequence was, that Henry's kind patrons had the pleasure of seeing him grow up with every reasonable promise of turning out a highly-principled and religious man. At the time of which we write he was rather more than fifteen years old, and in most things was far superior to boys generally of that age. He was well instructed in history, particularly in that of his own country, had made great progress in

geography, and, besides being a good arithmetician, had devoted a considerable portion of his time to mathematics; beyond all this, and far more important, under the tuition of Mr. Milles,—who was in the habit of receiving a class of the children of the wealthy inhabitants of Preston weekly, to instruct in theology,—he had studied ecclesiastical history, and was thoroughly conversant with the doctrines held by his own Church. Nor in this last respect had Bradwell neglected the duty which, as Henry's godfather, devolved upon him. He was in the habit of spending much time in reading with his young friend works of a religious tendency, and always took great interest in the reports which his godson brought of the vicar's weekly lectures.

They were thus engaged one evening, when Mr. Milles entered the room, and said he had an important communication to make; he had received a letter from the Bishop of the diocese, signifying his intention of visiting Preston during the summer, for the purpose of holding a confirmation.

“As Henry is of proper age, I shall therefore hope,” added the vicar, “to be able to present him to the Bishop for participation in that holy rite, and shall expect him regularly to attend my confirmation-lectures, which will be given twice a week.”

After this intelligence, which was very gratifying to Bradwell and his godson, the conversation turned on the subject of confirmation, when Bradwell observed,—

“I have frequently thought that too little attention is paid to this important rite. You will understand that I intend to say nothing disrespectful of our spiritual guides in my remarks; but it strikes me, first of all, that the Bishops generally do not assign to confirmation that importance which belongs to it. I do not say that they disregard it, or slight it, but that it is not placed by

them as highly among their episcopal functions as it ought to be."

"Do you allude to its being administered so seldom?" asked the vicar.

"That is one of my reasons," replied his friend; "I cannot think once in three years, which generally is the rule with Bishops, is enough. I see no reason why confirmation should not be administered annually. This would certainly place a holy rite, which is peculiar to the highest order in the ministry, in a fitter position than it is at present."

"Perhaps it would do so," responded Mr. Milles; "and, indeed, I do not doubt but that the Bishops would gladly hold an annual confirmation, had they the power of doing so—I mean, had they time enough for it; but the fact is, that many of them,—I may say, most or all of them,—are so fully engaged, that they are obliged to decline many things, which, if done, would prove of the greatest service to their clergy and the people of their dioceses generally."

"Would it not be better," inquired Bradwell, "to divide the dioceses, or to have suffragan Bishops?"

"I certainly think the latter plan very desirable," replied the vicar; "but there are many men, more able than myself to discuss this question, who think otherwise."

"Well," continued Bradwell, "we will for the present leave this subject to them, as I am desirous to say my say upon the matter we commenced upon, viz. confirmation. I have spoken of the Bishops,—pray stop me," added he, smiling, "if you think I am going beyond my calling, or speaking evil of dignities,—I would next speak of the priests. I cannot think that *they* commonly assign that importance to confirmation which it deserves."

"In what way," asked Mr. Milles, "do you see the proof of this?"

"In many ways," answered the other; "but as sufficient for our present purpose, I will say, first, in the low views as to its nature, which they frequently hold and teach; and, secondly, in the careless way in which they very often prepare their children for it. In my own case, I remember that the one idea I had of the nature of confirmation was, that I confirmed the vows and promises I had made at baptism: the consequence was, that I looked upon this holy rite as a simple ceremony of the Church, not intended to convey grace, but merely to press upon my mind the remembrance of what I had promised at baptism; and I thought that the presence of the Bishop, and the laying on of his hands, was only intended to make the ceremony more imposing."

"But do you imagine," asked the vicar, "that such is a common impression, or rather that you were placed under unfortunate circumstances, where your clergyman was but imperfectly acquainted with this subject?"

"I fear," replied Bradwell, "that such a low view is very commonly entertained and taught by the clergy, and that its sacramental nature is very often overlooked."

"Perhaps you are right," said the vicar, "although one could wish the case were otherwise. But now for the practice in which you think we fail so much."

"Well, then," continued Bradwell, "I do not imagine that the occasional preparation the children have, for instance, one night in seven, or even the more regular teaching which in some cases they enjoy for a few weeks, is sufficient duly to fit them for confirmation. In my opinion, it is impossible to understand the dispositions and acquirements of children in so short a

time, so fully, at least, as to say whether or not they are prepared for such a rite."

"And in what way," asked Mr. Milles, "would you remedy this?"

"It is difficult," answered Bradwell, "to reply satisfactorily to your question; but I should say, that the mode you adopt in these cases appears to me as good as any. With regard to the holy rite itself, I have ever heard you speak of it as a high and holy ordinance, sacramental in its nature, and conveying grace; and in your catechisings on Sundays and holy days, together with your private instructions to the young, I see that preparation which should fit all that properly use it for a due reception of the great blessings that doubtlessly attend upon this holy ordinance of the Church."

"I thank you," replied the vicar, "for the kind way in which you speak of my poor attempts to do my duty in this instance, which I must set down to your feelings of friendship; but, indeed, with regard to what you have said generally, I most fully concur; I do think that, for some reason or other, probably from a fear of appearing to favour the Roman Catholic view as to sacraments, we of this day have lost sight, to a very great degree, of the sacramental nature of some ordinances in the Church, among which confirmation may justly be adduced. There is one other point connected with this subject which you have not touched upon, but which, I think, demands as much consideration as those things of which you have spoken. I mean, the incautious way in which young persons are admitted to Holy Communion. I have no doubt but that this has arisen from the lamentable state in which our flocks generally are. A clergyman from among a large population has perhaps but a twentieth or a thirtieth part

of them communicants; he is anxious, of course, to remedy so great an evil; he sees in the candidates for confirmation the means of doing so; and, without duly instructing them in the things required of those who go to the Lord's Supper, he tells them, that unless they are fit to come to the holy Communion, they are unfit to come to confirmation."

"And is not this true?" asked Bradwell.

"True, undoubtedly," replied the vicar; "but the mere statement of such a proposition is scarcely sufficient preparation for holy Communion; and yet, I believe, it is frequently all the young candidates have. Of course there can be no doubt as to the point of all persons prepared for confirmation being prepared for holy Communion; but the truth of the case is, that many are admitted to both who are fit for neither."

"The real point then is," said Bradwell, "that you object to the incautious way in which the young are admitted to confirmation, and the defective instruction they receive on the subject of the holy Eucharist."

"Exactly so," replied the vicar; "you have stated my objections better than I did myself."

"It is necessary, I think," continued Bradwell, "to have clear views upon this subject, or we shall fall into another error, viz. of encouraging the young to be confirmed, and yet treating holy Communion with indifference. Surely the only proper way is to give both their due honour, and to admit no person to one or other unless duly prepared for both. Confirmation, although not a sacrament necessary to salvation, is doubtless so intimately connected with the two sacraments that are, that it appears to me almost wrong to separate it from them."

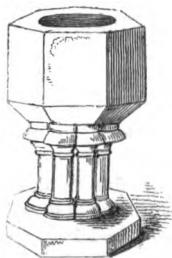
"And yet it is distinct," observed Mr. Milles.

"Yes," said Bradwell, "it is in one sense; never-

theless, in another sense it is not ; but as a plank across a brook forms a mode of communication between the two banks, so, to my mind, confirmation is, as it were, the stepping-stone between holy Baptism and the Eucharist ; and, although neither one nor the other, partakes in some degree of the nature of both."

In due time the day arrived ; the Bishop with his chaplain came ; and by ten o'clock in the morning the roads on all sides of Preston were thronged with the young of the different parishes in the neighbourhood, each flock headed by its pastor, and hurrying onward to Preston, where the confirmation was to take place. I know few things more interesting than a confirmation, and have seen few sights more beautiful than that which the church presented on this occasion. The whole body of it was filled with the young ; the girls for the most part dressed in modest white, and the greater portion of those present apparently impressed with the nature of the solemn service in which they were about to be engaged. The galleries—I am sorry to say there were galleries—were filled with the parents and friends of the children. One difference was observable in the case of Mr. Milles's children, which it will be well to mention. With many of the candidates for confirmation,—in all cases, viz. where the plan could be adopted,—was one or more grown-up persons, who proved to be the respective godparents, and who accompanied the children when they went to the altar ; and sought from God, through Christ, by the hands of the heads of the Church, that heavenly grace which alone would enable them to persevere in the good course in which they had been instructed to walk. Among those thus present was Bradwell, who attended upon the young orphan ; and with a moistened eye and beating heart, heard the confession made by

him, that he renewed his baptismal vow and promise, and witnessed the imposition of the Bishop's hands. As soon as the holy rite was over, the Bishop ascended the pulpit and addressed the children, pointing out to them the nature, privilege, and responsibilities of confirmation, urging them to meditate frequently and earnestly on the service in which they had been engaged, and to strive to live up to the vows and promises they had ratified and confirmed. After this the congregation dispersed, and all returned to their own homes.



CHAPTER VIII.

Church-Discipline.

Is there no sound about our altars heard,
Of gliding forms that long have watched in vain
For slumbering Discipline to break her chain ?

Lyra Apostolica.

ON the following morning, Bradwell was sitting with his wife, when the servant ushered into the room Mr. M'Adams, a neighbouring Roman Catholic, who was in the habit of paying occasional visits to Bradwell, when they commonly engaged in some friendly discussion upon one or more of those points of difference which unhappily separate the English and Roman branches of the Church. On the present occasion, he came to ask some questions on the subject of the confirmation which had taken place on the previous day, to all of which Bradwell answered as well as he was able.

"Well," said Mr. M'Adams, after a lengthened conversation, "I really have little to complain of, as to the view which you set forth as being that of your Church with regard to confirmation ; there are points of difference between us, but by no means as great as I had imagined them to be ; nevertheless, I cannot believe that your view is correct ; or if it be, I must say that there is something radically defective in your discipline, as I know several clergymen who set forth quite a different statement from that you have given. I allude particularly to what you say of its being sacramental in its nature. Now I fancy there are very many in your Church who do not believe this ; just as there are many

who deny regeneration in baptism, and the real presence in the holy Eucharist."

"I fear there may be such," replied Bradwell; "and, as you observe, if it be so, it is certainly a great proof of a want of discipline in our Church, that such different doctrines should be taught by her clergy; and, indeed, I will not deny your charge as to our defective discipline,—there are certainly many things I could wish to have amended."

"Ah," said M'Adams, somewhat triumphantly, "we have discipline."

"Yes," replied Bradwell, quietly, "you have, and I trust may long preserve it; but still you have some points on which your clergy do not agree, and which should teach you to be charitable in your remarks with regard to the present differences which exist among us. Besides, I might add something on the subject of your agreement, and turn round upon you by asserting that our differences, distressing as they are, in reality bring less evil to us than your admitted union does to you. Surely it is less fatal for a body of men to be divided in points of doctrine, than it is for them all to retain error."

"Doubtless," replied Mr. M'Adams, "but this is begging the question; so we will go on with our former subject, in connexion with which, I must tell you of a circumstance that occurred during this confirmation. I have a friend residing in a hamlet belonging to the neighbouring parish of Weavey, upon the truth of whose statement I can rely, who tells me, that just a fortnight before the Bishop's arrival, the curate of the parish, Mr. Willey, went round to many of the houses, and told the people, that if any of them wished to have tickets for confirmation, they must meet him at such a day, at—where do you think?"

"I really cannot tell," replied Bradwell.

"At the Wesleyan Sunday-school," answered the other.

"You surely must have been misinformed," said Bradwell.

"No," continued Mr. M'Adams, smiling, "little fear of that. But I have not done yet. The day arrived for giving out the tickets, as they are called; a great number of young came—for Dighton, the hamlet in question, is, as you know, very populous;—the greater portion were dissenters! What do you say to this?"

Bradwell was silent.

Mr. M'Adams resumed. "The tickets were distributed by Mr. Willey. There was no examination into their creed, no inquiry into their mode of life, both of which the curate certified, on the ticket, were satisfactory. Well, sir, I have yet a little more. On the following morning, the day appointed by the Bishop, these young persons met at the same place, the Wesleyan Sunday-school. Carts were provided, as the distance, I suppose, was greater than they liked to walk, into which this motley congregation of all denominations was put; and away they drove to participate in what we consider a sacrament—you, at least a religious ordinance. I was present when they left the village; and can assure you that I have seldom been more shocked in my life. The whole affair had any thing but a serious look about it. The girls were dressed up with all sorts of trumpery, as though they were going to a fair; and both boys and girls laughed and giggled, as you might expect to see them do when engaged in some expedition of pleasure. But their want of reverence was not the worst part of the business to my mind. Just remember: these persons who laugh at all your ideas about the Church, who deny every

thing you assert concerning it,—some of them Baptists, some Independents, some Wesleyans, and I am not quite sure, but some, I think, Socinians,—these persons, utterly ignorant of what they were doing, went, at the invitation of a clergyman of your Church, to a solemn religious ceremony, where, in the face of God and the congregation, they told a dreadful lie. They were accepted as members of your Church—as members of your Church they were confirmed; they left the place, and probably, from that time to the day of their death, they will never enter a church again. It is really monstrous, in my opinion most fearful, that such things should be allowed among you; most cruel to these poor dissenters, as you call them, who know no better; and most dreadful to yourselves, as likely to bring down God's righteous vengeance upon those who thus act."

"It is indeed," replied Bradwell, "very sad that such things are permitted; but I would hope that this case is not a common one."

"By no means," answered the other. "Were it so, I should not have been a Catholic, or, as you would term it, a Roman Catholic."

"I was not aware that you had ever been other," said Bradwell.

"Yes," added Mr. M'Adams; "I was brought up in the Church of England; but left it, first of all, from disgust at the utter want of discipline in it, and then became confirmed in my secession by the clearer truths which afterwards broke in upon my mind."

"With regard to the latter point," added Bradwell, "I will not now speak. Of course, I think on that head differently from you; but with relation to your first reason for leaving the Church of England, I would simply say, that, born in her bosom, you owed her a son's duty, which you ill repaid by deserting her."

"Why, what would you have had me do?" asked M'Adams.

"To my mind your course was plain," replied Bradwell. "You saw, we will admit, that your holy mother was not free from faults; as a dutiful and affectionate child, you should, in an humble and quiet, but persevering manner, have endeavoured to procure an amendment of what was wrong. You would thus, in a measure, have repaid the filial debt you owed her. Surely you could have no right to leave her, even supposing that you had found a branch of the Church in which you perceived none of those evils you complain of. Just suppose for a moment that every child who discovered his parents erring was to desert his paternal roof, start off, resolved to make a home for himself, which is what Protestant dissenters in the first instance do, or to go to a house where he was offered an asylum, which is what you did. In such a case, you do not think the child would be acting properly. I certainly cannot, for one moment, think you did right, even supposing you had discovered, which of course I do not allow, a home which is freer from faults than the one you left. I know many persons like yourself who, searching after a visionary good, perfection on earth, fancy it is to be found in other situations than that in which they are; the consequence is, they wander about in an unsettled and most unsatisfactory way. It is possible, my dear sir, that the time may come when you will discover quite as much cause to leave that portion of the Church to which you now belong as influenced you in the former instance to leave that in which you had been baptised."

At this period, Henry Howard entered the room to say he brought a message from Mr. Milles, who would be glad of Bradwell's company, if so disposed,

to walk up to Weston Hall, where he wished to call. As Bradwell had no particular business in hand, he willingly assented to this proposition; and as soon as Mr. M'Adams took his leave, started with Henry in the direction of the vicarage.

CHAPTER IX.

Weston Hall.

Tradition tells,
That, in Eliza's golden days, a knight
Came on a war-horse sumptuously attired,
And fixed his home in this sequestered vale.

WORDSWORTH.

WESTON HALL, the house to which the party, consisting of the vicar, Bradwell, and young Henry, were going, was an old-fashioned stone house, beautifully situated at the distance of little more than a mile from the town of Preston, upon the banks of the Ribble, which flowed through the grounds, and for many miles was visible as it came down the rich valley, on whose side to the north the town was built. The house was now very different in size and appearance from what it had been in former days. It was built in the reign of Edward III. by a Sir David Zouch, and at first had been erected in the form of a square. In this state it remained until the time of the great rebellion, when one of the Lord Zouch's, who then held the property, and was a stanch adherent of Charles, refusing to admit the forces of Fairfax, suffered a siege of six days, during which the whole of one side was battered down, and the house in other parts so seriously injured, that

for many years it was left untenanted. Towards the commencement of the eighteenth century the property passed into a younger branch of the Zouch family, whose descendants resided there until within a few years of the date of our tale, when the present possessor, taking disgust at the factories springing up on all sides of his property, determined upon letting his house, and residing in a southern county. In consequence of this, Weston was to be let; and a retired manufacturer, of the name of Ford, became its tenant. The house was still very large, three sides of the original square remaining; and at the time when taken by Mr. Ford, was well filled with the old-fashioned oak furniture which is so frequently to be seen in ancient mansions in the north of England. The tradesman's friends passed many and different remarks upon his going to Weston Hall, which, from the associations connected with it, appeared to them to have a claim upon the aristocracy for a tenant. Some said, that Master Ford would soon find what it was to ape his betters; that pride must have a fall; and that it would have been much better for him to have kept in his old house in the Market-Place, where he was within a short walk of his factory. Others said, they thought he had as much right to a good house as the Zouch's had, for they were sure he had more money, and as he was liberal-minded, that it would be far better for the tenantry on the estate to have a man who would spend his income among them, than one who took the greater part to London and spent it there. Among these latter were the old and young ladies of Preston, and such other persons of the male gender as regarded an entrance into Weston Hall a matter of gratulation in itself; and flattered themselves that Mr. Ford's dinner-parties would not only prove pleasant for their own intrinsic merit, — a

good cook being in their idea indispensable in a house as large and important as Weston,—but that the host thereof would be a very useful stepping-stone to their introduction to the Werdens, Stanleys, and other neighbouring families, who, rejoicing in the name of county people, kept themselves aloof from the plebeian folk of Preston. In these feelings and expectations Ford and his wife partook ; he fearing that he might have stepped out of his position in life by taking a place whose possessors had always been regarded as superior to the class to which he considered himself to belong,—she indulging dreams of the future advancement of the family, when the Fords would take their place in the county with the aforesaid Werdens and Stanleys, and when her former acquaintances would look up to her as the ruling spirit in all the gaieties of Preston.

As soon as they were settled, Mrs. Ford determined upon living in a style commensurate with their new position, Mr. Ford slowly acquiescing with each change or addition that was made in the establishment. At first, the dirty boy, who, in one person, and that a very diminutive one, had performed some four or five distinct offices, was exchanged for a full-grown man, who, in Mr. Ford's idea, appeared to be a butler. In this, however, that gentleman was mistaken; as in a short time a new suit of coloured clothes, which his wife had fixed upon for the Ford livery, disclosed him to be a footman; and the lady's demand, which came shortly, for a proper butler, dissipated at once any little doubts that might have lingered in his mind on the subject. Next, an undoubted coachman was added; then came female additions—housekeeper, under-cook, upper-housemaid, &c. &c. After this a new carriage was to be purchased, on which, instead of the well-known G. F., which described the initials of its owner's

name, was now painted a large coat of arms, with crest and appendages, all purchased from the herald's office for the trifling sum of 150*l*. It should be stated, in justice to that lady's taste, that these last were added at Mrs. Ford's suggestion, and the expense paid out of her own private purse. In the first instance, indeed, she had given directions to the coachmaker to have two crests painted on the panels, the second of which she left to his choice; and upon her husband's remonstrating against what he said was a little too much, she answered, that the Werdens had two crests on their carriage, and she was sure they could not afford it better than themselves. This, however, was overruled, and the carriage came home adorned with one crest only: in consideration of the loss of dignity which the vehicle sustained in this instance, the one crest was multiplied to a great extent, appearing not merely on the panels in paint, but on the handles and all round the roof in brass. Additions, also, of different kinds were made in the furniture; large paintings, said to be the works of the best masters of the Flemish and Venetian schools, were hung on the walls, instead of the grim old visages of the Zouch's, who, after many years' residence in the entrance-hall, dining and drawing-rooms, were now handed up to an old lumber-closet, there to remain in ignoble obscurity, till some one of their descendants, out of respect for his ancestors, should bring them forth from their hiding-place. New chairs, and sofas, and other things of the same kind were added to the sitting-rooms; the former being decided by Mrs. Ford to be too unfashionable to remain. In all these alterations Mr. Ford may be said to have been an almost inactive spectator; now and then, as we said, he was a little startled at seeing the way in which his luxuries were increasing around him, and at

his growing importance ; but his wife, who was a shrewd person, and aware of the man with whom she had to deal, took care that all the innovations should be introduced so gradually, and with so much tact, that they grew upon him almost imperceptibly. Had the case been otherwise, those who knew him best, asserted that he would not have suffered so much to be done.

The new tenants had been at Weston about a year, and were becoming tolerably well settled, and moderately accustomed to their change of circumstances, when an idea struck Mrs. Ford, of a higher and bolder nature than any which had come across her mind since they left the Market-Place. This was nothing less than building a church. The parish church was a long distance from the Hall, and the Zouch's had built it ; urged, therefore, by a desire of convenience, emulation, and fame, Mrs. Ford determined upon building a church also. The subject was at first broken to Mr. Ford in a very delicate and doubtful manner : he heard frequently of the great want of a place of worship for the poor at the Weston end of the town ; then his ambition was played upon by allusions to the fair name the Zouch's had purchased to themselves by building the parish church ; and soft insinuations were added of the easy and cheap way in which churches were built now. To all these hints Ford turned a deaf ear ; in fact, he was not at all aware of the drift of such remarks. He knew, indeed, that his wife had considerable ambition in the furniture-line, and had gone so far as to carry the arms and the crest ; but that she really thought of building a church, such an idea never entered his mind. The hints, however, were left to work their way ; the hard ground, she thought, might be softened, and then it would be easier to break it up and sow the seed.

In pursuance of her object, she called upon Mr. Milles, who appeared much pleased with the plan.

"There was certainly a want of churches in Preston," he said; "so much so, that he was now endeavouring to raise contributions sufficient to defray the expenses of building one at Caton, a district on the south side of the town, where was a dense population of the very poorest of the people; and if another could be built on the west side, it would be of great advantage to the poor in that neighbourhood, although not so requisite as in the other spot he had mentioned."

Mrs. Ford did not much like to hear of this church at Caton, for she feared it might interfere with her plans. This, however, she did not venture to disclose; on the contrary, she expressed herself very much pleased at the prospect, and said it would be so delightful to see them growing up together like twin brothers or sisters.

After some few remarks upon this point, she asked the vicar, as though the question had just occurred to her, whether the Zouch's had not built the parish church.

"Yes," he replied; "one of them built and endowed it in the 14th century."

"That is," said the lady, "I suppose he undertook the management of it, collected the necessary funds.—I wonder," continued Mrs. Ford, in the same breath—"I wonder how they collected money for building churches then; I am sure if it was by bazaars or charity-sermons, I am glad that I did not live in those days. Why, it would have taken five hundred bazaars, or more."

"With regard to the parish church," observed Mr. Milles, "I am able to tell you, that there were no such means adopted for raising funds."

"None?" repeated Mrs. Ford; "then how was the money obtained?"

"One of the Zouch's," replied the vicar, "built it at his own expense."

"What!" said the lady, apparently much shocked at the thought; "then you really believe, Mr. Milles, that the people in those days did think to purchase heaven by building churches."

"If they did so," replied the vicar, "of course they thought very wrong; but in this instance you need be under no such apprehension. You have probably seen a brass plate in the church, on a pillar in the nave?"¹

¹ The following inscription is engraved on a brass plate in Ashley Church, Staffordshire:—

IN PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM
MANUBIAS DEO
DAVID KENRICUS, PIETAS EJUS MEMORIAE,
HOC VIRTUTIS PRÆMIOLUM DICAVIT.

MIRA CANO PIETAS SÆVIS REPERITUR IN ARMIS
ÆDIFICAT BELLUM STERNERE QUOD SOLEAT:
HANC SACRAM STRUXIT MILES MEMORABILIS ÆDEM
PRINCIPE SUB NIGRO, QUEM MERUISSE FERUNT
DAVID KENRICUS: DAVIDE BEATIOR ILLO
TEMPLUM CUI SUPERIS ÆDIFICARE NEFAS.

Fair virtue's deeds transmit a glorious name,
That lives on records of eternal fame.

This holy edifice,
arising from the spoils of a conquered enemy,
was dedicated by DAVID KENRICK
to the Omnipotent.

Hail, wondrous piety, when seen in arms!
Whose balmy breath a hero's bosom warms,
To build, and not destroy with impious ire,
A solemn temple and a sacred choir.
Kenrick! to early scenes of slaughter led,
By Edward's son in toils of battle bred,
This pile erected, by his God approved,
His country honour'd, and his prince beloved:
Happier than David he, allowed to raise
An altar sacred to Jehovah's praise.

"Frequently," replied Mrs. Ford; "but never read what was upon it."

"Well," continued the vicar, "that plate, together with some ancient documents connected with the church, tell us who it was that built it, and the motives which urged him to it. A certain Sir David Zouch was returning from the French wars with the Black Prince, when, in a march towards Scotland, he became separated from the main army in this neighbourhood, and lost his way; after wandering for some time, night overtook him; and in the spot where the church stands, he stuck his spear in the ground, with a vow, that if it should please God to restore him to his friends, he would fix his residence near to the place, and on the spot itself erect a church, in remembrance of God's great goodness towards him. Having thus vowed, it appears that he waited there until the morning, when, to his great joy, he discovered some of his companions, and returned to the prince, to whom he mentioned what had happened. The prince, approving of the pious vow of his follower, obtained for him a grant of that property which the Zouch's now possess. To this place, on returning from the Scottish wars, Sir David came; and having first built and endowed the parish church, erected that mansion in which you live."

"Well, really," replied Mrs. Ford, "I don't see any thing very wrong in this; do you, Mr. Milles?"

"Far from it," replied the vicar; "I think it evinced a pious and grateful heart in Sir David Zouch, and afforded an example which I could wish to see more frequently followed than, alas, in these days it is."

Mrs. Ford did not like exactly the turn the conversation was taking; and apprehensive lest the remarks upon this subject might become personal, she wished the vicar good morning, saying she would call again, as

soon as her plans were a little more matured. On the following morning the subject was broached at breakfast to Mr. Ford, who heard of the project with much surprise, and declined giving an answer until he had weighed the subject. In a few days he replied, that if 50*l.* would set the thing a-going, he should have no objection to subscribe that; but, what with new furniture, carriage, horses, crests, arms, &c. &c. he had really so little money to spend just now, that he must decline giving any more. With this sum in hand, Mrs. Ford commenced her subscription-list; and by hard exertions, bazaars, cards for shilling donations, and such means, contrived at last to raise funds sufficient for her object. A contract was entered into with an architect, in which he agreed to furnish plans whereby a safe and convenient church, with tower and bell, should be built for the sum of 1400*l.* In due time the church was finished; in all respects such an one as is so well described by Mr. Paget in St. Antholin's, as built by Mr. Compo. The architect declared the style to be *composite*; whether out of compliment to the aforesaid Mr. Compo, or the class of architecture in which it was built, he did not say,—probably the latter, as it was as complete a jumble as could well be imagined. It was on the subject of this church, that the vicar was now on his way with Bradwell towards Weston Hall. He had, on the previous day, received a note from Mrs. Ford, in which he learned, that the Bishop refused to consecrate the new church unless an endowment of 1000*l.* was provided for the future maintenance of a clergyman. In this dilemma, Mrs. Ford flew for advice and assistance to the vicar, whom, except in the first instance, she had declined consulting during the whole proceedings: She knew he was anxious that the church to the south of the town should be erected first; and fearing his

opposition to her plans, had determined upon an independent course. The consequence was, that the town had been regularly canvassed for the west-end church, and the vicar obliged to postpone all thoughts of his church at Caton.

CHAPTER X.

An unexpected Difficulty.

Checks and disasters
Grow in the veins of actions highest rear'd;
As knots, by a conflux of meeting sap,
Infect the sound pine and divert his grain
Tortive and errant, from his course of growth.

SHAKSPERE.

As Mr. Milles and his companions were drawing near to the house, they were joined by Mr. Ford's two children, Charles and Rachael, whom we must introduce to our readers. Charles, the eldest of the two, was now about sixteen years of age, and naturally a very talented and amiable boy; his education, however, had been most sadly neglected; and at the present time, natural excellences, which had grown wild from inattention, appeared likely to degenerate into vices, and threatened a headstrong and rebellious manhood. It would be wrong to say that his education had been entirely neglected. At an early age he was sent to a public school at Sappbury, where, by cribbing themes and verses from other boys, and "getting construes," as it is technically termed, he contrived to keep himself some three or four from the bottom of his class, there being at that time, fortunately for him, just so many boys on his form more stupid, and about as idle as himself. By

some means or other he also generally managed, after the first two or three half-years, to escape flogging ; the cause of which we believe to be, that the head-master, Dr. Bird, seldom flogged boys, but such as he thought would repay his and their pains by a future brilliant career at one of the universities. Of this, Master Charles gave no promise ; for although, as we have said, with plenty of natural talent, he had tact enough to disclose only just so much as was sufficient for his own purposes ; and having learned, from the prevalent report in the school, the danger of possessing good abilities, he kept his own in the background as much as possible. The consequence was, that his "*cabbages*," &c. were winked at ; and, on the whole, he had a very pleasant and independent time of it. During the holydays, of course, he did nothing, and heard but little from morning to night, except the great and illustrious honours that were awaiting him, as the future representative of the Ford family and tenant expectant of Weston Hall. As to better things, the things of another world, these were seldom spoken of at Sappbury, and but rarely practised at Weston, except, indeed, on a Sunday, when the family made a point of attending church, and afterwards had one or two old friends to tea to discuss the merits of the sermon, and the clergyman's reading, &c. They had also a way of speaking of religion at school, which was worse than not speaking of it at all. The boys, as boys whose religious education is neglected commonly do, made puns and jokes upon Scripture names, and used to open their Bibles to tell fortunes, or to discover passages they might interpret in an improper manner. At Weston also, in a more reserved way, these practices were observed ; and in addition, Charles and his sister were frequent listeners to the different controversies held by their mother and

some of her female friends, who considered themselves learned in such matters, in which they often heard their clergyman, Mr. Milles, laughed at, and called bigoted, foolish, puritanical, popish, &c. All these things had their influence upon the children's minds, and to a very lamentable extent perverted the good qualities they naturally possessed. The vicar, who had frequent opportunities of meeting Charles both at his father's house and at Bradwell's, where he went occasionally as a play-fellow with Henry Howard, saw the threatening danger; and as the pastor of the flock, thought it right to state to Mr. Ford the anxiety he felt respecting his son's present course and future prospects.

In consequence of this, he called upon Mr. Ford, stating what his apprehensions were, and saying that, as the clergyman of the parish, he thought it right to speak to him on what he considered the eternal welfare of his child. Mr. Ford heard patiently all the vicar had to say; and, after consulting with him, resolved to remove Charles from Sapbury, and place him with a private tutor in the neighbourhood of Preston. This accordingly was done, and Charles Ford became domesticated in the family of Mr. Melcomb, vicar of Marton. He had now been with this gentleman for rather more than a year and a half; and although he had paid more attention to his learning lately than when at the public school, and seemed to be making some progress in his books, yet, from one or two conversations which the vicar had with him, he did not feel altogether satisfied with what he heard. Charles was certainly improved in some respects,—there could be no doubt as to that; still he was very different from what he ought to have been. He was more studious and less profane in his remarks upon religion than he was before going to Mr. Melcomb; but he was very forward

and self-opinionated, talked loudly and boldly upon matters with which he was entirely unacquainted ; and on his first interview with the vicar, after his arrival at Weston, wished to draw him into an argument upon the doctrine of regeneration in baptism, which he said he could prove was not scriptural. Mr. Milles smiled, although mournfully, at his young friend's polemical propensities, and recommended him to turn to Proverbs x. 14 and xvii. 27, 28, as the best answer he could give. A longer acquaintance did not tend in any respect to lessen the vicar's fears as to the present state of Charles's mind ; and in a subsequent conversation with Mr. Ford he again mentioned the subject.

Mr. Ford said he was obliged by what the vicar told him, and would attend to it ; he accordingly mentioned it to his wife, who remarked that she felt no surprise that Mr. Milles disliked Charles's present course, for she had heard her son give the vicar a regular set-down in some important point of theology, which he was not likely very easily to forget. It was therefore decided that Charles should remain where he was, until old enough to go to Cambridge.

Rachel Ford was some few years younger than her brother ; and although resembling him in some points of character, was at the same time a very different kind of person. Charles was generous and sincere, resolute in his determinations, and impetuous in his actions ; in these respects his sister resembled him. Both were very sanguine in any thing they undertook, and both fully bent upon acting up to their convictions. Rachel, however, had none of that love of applause which formed a leading feature in her brother's character. What she did was from a conviction of its being right ; while what he did frequently arose from a desire to arouse the attention and excite the admiration of others. Like her

brother, Rachel was naturally clever and amiable ; but like him also her education had been greatly neglected. Her time had principally been spent at home with her cousin Ann Croft, who, having lost her parents at an early age, resided after that event with her aunt ; and, in return for the trouble and expense she brought with her, paid a certain annual sum out of her small income, and, in addition, undertook to superintend the education of Rachel. Ann Croft, unfortunately, had been brought up in a bad school : her father had been what some few years since was called a Churchman, *i. e.* he had gone to church generally ; the exceptions being when he went to a dissenting place of worship, which was the case on charity-sermon nights, and other such times. Her mother had been a Dissenter, and only occasionally went to church to please her husband. Church-discipline was unfortunately little regarded in the town where Ann's father and mother lived ; and among such as called themselves Churchmen, Ann observed an absence of holiness which, when compared with the stricter discipline of the Wesleyans, to which sect her mother belonged, had the effect of drawing her affections towards the latter. It was not the custom at Lesley church—such was the name of the place—to say any thing about Dissenters ; so, as long as Ann was there, she had no idea that dissent was wrong, or that schism, in the true meaning of the word, was sin. The consequence was, that she grew up with very uncertain notions on some of the great truths of Christianity, although, from a naturally good disposition, and the kind instruction of a pious mother, she was thoroughly sincere in her professions, and acted in a strictly conscientious way, as far as her knowledge went. On first coming to Preston, she was much shocked at some things she heard said by Mr. Milles-

with regard to Dissenters, which were very different from what she conceived the truth ; but after much reflection, she was obliged to admit there was some justice in his remarks, and that the matter was of so grave a nature as to demand a deep investigation, which she promised to give. To this person's care Rachel was committed, and, as may be supposed, grew up with very indistinct ideas upon many most important points of religion.

As soon as the two young people, whom we have introduced to our readers, had answered the few questions put to them by the vicar and Bradwell, as to their mother being at home, &c., they detached Henry from his companions, and took him off to a distant part of the grounds. In the mean while the two elder personages went up to the Hall, and on their arrival were ushered into the library, where Mrs. Ford and Miss Croft were sitting. After the first customary remarks, Mrs. Ford expressed her thanks to Mr. Milles for attending to her summons so quickly.

"We have met," she continued, with this unforeseen difficulty as to the endowment at the most unfortunate time possible. Just fancy, Mr. Bradwell," turning herself to him, "what a sad disappointment it is to us ! The Bishop was to have stayed here ; and Mr. Jenkins, from Blackpool, promised to preach the evening sermon ; and the workmen have been hurried on so much for the last month, that they engaged to have it all finished by the day appointed. And now all has been done for nothing—it is really very provoking."

"But why should it be all for nothing ?" asked the vicar.

"Why ?" repeated Mrs. Ford ; "why, where can we possibly raise 1000*l.* more ? I've ransacked heaven and earth to collect what has been already collected ;

I've had bazaars, and cards, and charity-sermons ; I've written at least, I should think, a thousand letters ; and with all have been able to raise no more than 1200*l.*, which is 200*l.* less than is required for the building alone ; and then, when it is built, there will be railing it in, and buying surplices and books, which, with other things, will come to 100*l.* more ; so that, do what I will, I shall scarcely be able to pay off these expenses—but 1000*l.* besides !—oh, Mr. Milles, it is quite impossible.”

“ It may be very difficult,” said the vicar ; “ but I should hope not impossible.”

“ Quite impossible,” continued Mrs. Ford ; “ besides, the money, you know, is for the endowment, which makes the thing worse. In these days, we all know, people like to see something for their money. Old Deacon, for instance, refused to subscribe unless we promised to have a bit of a spire, as he calls it. Had this 1000*l.* been wanted for the building-fund, perhaps one might have raised it—although then, indeed, I scarcely know how ; but for an endowment, I'm sure we cannot.”

“ And what,” asked the vicar, “ do you intend to do ?”

“ Oh,” replied Mrs. Ford, “ I can't tell ; I don't know at all ; it is a most provoking business. Don't you think, Mr. Milles, that you could persuade the Bishop to consecrate the church without the endowment ? It might be added, you know, with the font, which we have left to be put in at some future time.”

“ No,” replied the vicar, “ I do not think the Bishop would allow of that : indeed, he has not power, I believe, to do so. Besides, Mrs. Ford, suppose that he could and would consent, what is the new incumbent to do for a maintenance ?”

"Humph," said the lady; "I never thought of that. Poor man, he should have something."

"There is one way, indeed," remarked the vicar, after a pause, "by which this may be accomplished; and perhaps the best way, after all."

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Ford, brightening up.

"To endow it," replied Mr. Milles, "out of the property belonging to the vicarage. I do not much understand these points; but fancy this might be done without very great difficulty."

"Dear me," exclaimed Mrs. Ford, "what a delightful idea! Oh, I'm sure it might be done. The Bishop said, in his letter to Mr. Ford, that he should be very glad indeed if some way could be found by which the obstacle to the consecration could be removed. So I'm quite certain that he will make no objection, and none of us shall; really I do not see how there can be any difficulty in the matter."

"Very well," said the vicar, "if you please, you may mention this plan to Mr. Ford, and say that I should wish to have some conversation with him upon the subject, and that I am quite ready to do all in my power to assist in overcoming the difficulty."

"This really is kind, Mr. Milles; this is most delightful! And now I will tell you what I did not like to do, as long as there was no prospect of having the church consecrated,—I have engaged an incumbent—"

"Engaged a what?" interrupted Bradwell, who with difficulty suppressed a smile at this novel mode of speech,—at least so it appeared to him.

"I have engaged an incumbent," continued the lady; "Mr. Dwyer, a great friend of Mr. Jenkins at Blackpool, a most popular man. He has been preaching for the last four months at one of the most fashionable chapels in Dublin, and is followed after by every

body. Oh, I shall be so delighted to get dear Mr. Dwyer at the new church."

"I am afraid, Mr. Vicar," said Bradwell, addressing his friend, "that this plan of yours may possibly defeat Mrs. Ford's kind wishes with regard to Mr. Dwyer."

"In what way," asked Mrs. Ford, apparently somewhat alarmed.

"Why, I fancy," continued Bradwell, "that if Mr. Milles endows the church, he will have the presentation; and in this case might have some friend of his own, whom he would wish to appoint."

"Would he really have the appointment of the incumbent?" asked Mrs. Ford, in great surprise. "Why, *we* built the church."

"True," added the vicar; "but I believe Mr. Bradwell is right; and therefore, if you wish to have the presentation, you must, I fear, devise some other means than the one I proposed: still, if you cannot accomplish it as you wish, in any other way, remember, you may call upon me, and I shall be happy to give you my best assistance."

"But would you present the living to Mr. Dwyer?" asked the lady.

"I cannot pledge myself in such a case," observed the vicar. "I would certainly, if you wished it, inquire into Mr. Dwyer's character and capabilities; and if, after inquiry, it appeared to me that he was the fittest person for the cure of this new district, I should very willingly place it in his hands."

At this period Mrs. Marles entered the room, attended by the young party; after which, in a short time, the vicar and his companions went away.

CHAPTER XI.

The Offer, and its Reception.

Great works do oft yield grievous accidents,
Which stir up people's rage beyond intents.

LORD BROOKE.

As soon as Mr. Milles left the room, Mrs. Ford commenced a long statement to Mrs. Marles of this business of the endowment, concluding by telling her of the vicar's proposition, and the loss of presentation if his offer was accepted. Mrs. Marles listened very patiently to all her friend had to say, and then remarked that it was one of the most aggravating things she had ever heard of. "To think, Mrs. Ford," continued the lady—"to think of the trouble you have had, the pains you have taken to build this church, and now, after all, the consecration to be refused by the Bishop—it is very aggravating; and, between ourselves, I don't think the Bishop deserves much credit for his conduct; it is certainly very uncivil of his lordship—very uncivil indeed."

"And what do you think," asked Mrs. Ford, "of this proposal of the vicar's?"

"What do I think of it?" repeated the widow; "why, I think it is one of the most cunning and disgraceful things I ever heard of in my life. There he has been sitting quietly, watching all we have been about, and never attempting to put a finger to the business at all; excusing himself, forsooth, because Caton required a church more than Weston, and because he was pledged to undertake it first. He has been sitting

still doing nothing. under this paltry excuse, and has watched us until our church is built, knowing very well, I'll be bound to say, that we should not be able to get it consecrated, and thinking that he was sure to have it in his own hands. Oh, he's a very deep man; I've suspected him long ago, in spite of his great professions, and now, you see, it is all coming out."

"And you really think," asked Mrs. Ford, "that he knew all the while that we could not get it consecrated unless we gave the patronage to him?"

"Do I?" repeated Mrs. Marles; "do I? Yes, that I do; and should not at all be surprised if the Bishop is at the bottom of it too. You may depend upon it, that the Bishop and Vicar have been playing a deep game into one another's hands; this is too good a thing for these clergymen to let slip through their fingers so easily. No, no; it has been understood between them. I think it one of the shabbiest, dirtiest, most cunning, disgraceful things I ever knew."

Ann Croft, who had heard the whole conversation that had taken place between the Vicar and Mrs. Ford, but had hitherto made no remark, here observed, that she thought Mrs. Marles must be mistaken. "The vicar's character," she said, "was so well known, that no one could suspect him of being guilty of such deceit as was here imputed to him. He gave his reasons for not assisting in the erection of this new church, because he was engaged in erecting another where it was more wanted; it could not be supposed that he was aware there would be no endowment forthcoming when it was required, as he knew nothing about the money-affairs: indeed, I believe," she added, "he had never been consulted in the business at all."

"Very kind of you, Miss Croft, no doubt," replied Mrs. Marles, with a sneer; "very kind, to take

the vicar's part; but if you were to talk for a week, you would never convince me that he is not at the bottom of this refusal of the Bishop's, and has known all along what it would come to. I am dreadfully vexed about it—dreadfully; and I only wish I knew how to defeat their plans. Don't you think," she continued, addressing her neighbour, "that you could persuade Mr. Ford to endow it?"

"What!" asked Mrs. Ford, in great surprise, and rather angrily, "endow it with 1000*l.*? No, that he won't: he has given 50*l.* to the building, and I'm sure I've laboured night and day besides; and now to expect that he should give 1000*l.* more! really, Mrs. Marles, I think it is too bad in you to hint at such a thing. 1000*l.*, indeed! If Mr. Ford is to give away such sums as these in endowing churches, I wonder how we are to keep up appearances. Mr. Ford, you know, is now in a very responsible position; he is a magistrate for the county, and has to hold up his station in life. It is all very well for people who have few expenses, for single people and widows" (here Mrs. Ford looked very pointedly at her friend), "to give large sums of money for these purposes; but with us, with our family and our expenses, the thing is impossible."

"Well," continued the widow, "I did not mean to say any thing unkind, Mrs. Ford. I would not offend you for the world: but you spoke the other day of the Zouch's having built and endowed the parish church; and then you remarked, it would be so nice to have it said that the Fords had done the same: and so I thought you might wish to persuade Mr. Ford to do it."

"It would be nice," replied Mrs. Ford, rather softening at this allusion, "very nice. Yes, I should like that very much. Many of the ancestors of the old

families in the neighbourhood did, I believe, build and endow churches, and it would be very nice to do the same; but then, you see, Mrs. Marles, it is a very expensive thing—1000*l.* is a great sum of money.”

“It certainly is,” said Mrs. Marles; “but it gives a man a good deal of importance in the county; the Werdens, for instance, had a living to give away the other day. Why, there were dozens of clergymen applying for it; and I heard as a fact, from my cousin Sir Toby, who is a very intimate friend of the Earl of Duberly, that his lordship had applied personally to Mr. Werden for the living for one of his sons,—for one of his sons, Mrs. Ford! Now, just fancy the Earl of Duberly applying to Mr. Ford in a similar case!”

“It would be very nice indeed,” observed Mrs. Ford.

“Yes,” replied the widow; “and think what consequence it would give you in the county, and the invitations you would have to Duberly Manor! Every body has to purchase their first step into high society; and I really think that you could not do it in a much cheaper way than this.”

“Well,” continued Mrs. Ford, “I’ll tell you what I will do—I will speak to Mr. Ford on the subject, and then he can please himself. There are many things to be considered both ways. It certainly would be very nice to have a living to give away to whom one liked; but then 1000*l.* is a great deal of money; and, besides this, we could not give it Lord Duberly, for we have promised it to Mr. Dwyer.”

“And what if you have?” said the widow, turning her attack. “You like Mr. Dwyer, don’t you?”

“Yes,” replied Mrs. Ford, “very much indeed.”

“Your husband likes him?”

“Yes, very much too.”

"Now, mark my words," said Mrs. Marles very emphatically; "if the vicar gets the appointment, you may whistle for Mr. Dwyer. The vicar does not like popular preachers; and he'll no more give the living to Mr. Dwyer than he will give it to me. Tell Mr. Ford this, and at the same time beg him to guess what kind of man we are likely to have at the new church: do this, and I fancy he won't let the vicar have the appointment—that is, if he can help it."

At this point Mrs. Marles rose up to go; when Ann Croft retired to her own room, to muse upon the way in which modern church-livings are sometimes endowed; while Mrs. Ford went in search of her husband, to ascertain what he thought of this suggestion of the widow's.

Mr. Ford had just returned from his morning walk, in the course of which he had paid a visit to the new church; and when there, had fixed upon a pew for himself and family, which he considered well situated for seeing and hearing Mr. Dwyer. His thoughts were occupied with this subject, when his wife came into the room, and he told her, as well as he was able, the situation he had fixed upon. This was too good an opportunity to be lost; so Mrs. Ford at once introduced the subject of her morning's conversation with Mr. Milles, explaining the offer he had made.

"And a very handsome offer it is," said her husband, interrupting her.

"Yes; handsome indeed," remarked Mrs. Ford; "if he had not some reason in the background for making it. You are not perhaps aware, Mr. Ford," she continued, "that the person who endows this new church will have the appointment of an incumbent. Mr. Milles' offer is therefore doubtless very handsome:—as Mrs. Marles says, he has been quietly watching

all our exertions, in which he has not taken the least share, waits till the church is finished, and then steps in to reap all the benefit of it."

"But, my dear," exclaimed Mr. Ford, "surely the patronage of this new church is not the thing to tempt a man of Mr. Milles' character to do what is wrong?"

"As to Mr. Milles' character," replied the lady, sneeringly, "I can say nothing; but this I know, that the patronage of the church is a very good thing, and such as nobody would lose, if he could get it. You know well enough, my dear," she continued, in a blander and softer tone, "these are the things which give men so much importance, and afford so many advantages to one's own family. Mrs. Marles told me only just now, that Mr. Werden had a living to give away lately, and that dozens of gentlemen applied to him for it; and that even Lord Duberly went and asked him to give it to his son. I can assure you that other people do not treat those things so lightly; I consider it a capital thing for Mr. Milles, if he gets the patronage; but, indeed, there are so many persons who would be glad of it, that I have little fear of its falling into his hands."

"Well, my dear," said Mr. Ford, who at present had not the slightest idea to what his wife was coming; "well, my dear, I shall be very glad indeed if the thing can be settled satisfactorily. There certainly appears to be a good deal of trouble in getting up a church."

"Oh dear, yes!" replied Mrs. Ford, "an immense deal of trouble. I am sure I will never undertake any thing of the kind again; it's more trouble than it's worth. Did you not hear from Mr. Dwyer yesterday?" inquired the lady, turning her attack upon an-

other quarter, which she thought was perhaps more easy of access.

"Yes," replied her husband; "I had a very kind letter from him, in which he says he shall be very glad indeed to accept our offer."

"There again," exclaimed Mrs. Ford; "there's another difficulty: what shall we do with Mr. Dyer? we have absolutely promised him the living; and if, after all, it turns out that we have not power to give it to him, what a most unpleasant thing it will be! Mr. Dwyer will think we have treated him very unhand-somely, and the whole town will ridicule us. I saw that horrid Mr. Bradwell laughing in his sleeve this morning, all the while I was telling the vicar our troubles."

"My dear," said her husband, "pray don't speak ill of Bradwell; we all know what an excellent person he is: I am sure you must be mistaken as to his laughing at you. But as to the other point; I really do not see what you can do. It will be a sad thing to lose Dwyer; he is such a fine preacher, and we have all set our minds on him; but it can't be helped."

"It can't be helped, indeed," said Mrs. Ford, "except perhaps in one way; and that you will not like to do."

"Ask the vicar for the appointment this time, I suppose?" remarked her husband.

"No," said Mrs. Ford.

"What then?" inquired her husband.

"Endow it yourself," replied the lady.

"Yes," replied Mr. Ford, smiling at what he considered to be a little pleasantry of his wife; "yes, such would remove the difficulty in one way, but create a

very considerable difficulty in another quarter. Well, I really do not see what can be done."

"One thousand pounds," continued his lady, "would be well laid out in such a thing; *that* I am quite sure of."

"Perhaps so," observed her husband; "but what would be the advantage?"

Mrs. Ford recapitulated all she had said as to the additional consequence, &c. they would gain; and then dwelt very strongly upon the disappointment Mr. Dwyer would experience if not presented; finishing all by drawing a pleasant picture of the two families of the Fords and Zouch's, handed down to posterity as the co-benefactors of Preston.

Mr. Ford was a man not always easily overcome; in many of the changes that had taken place in his establishment he had struggled hard, and one or two, among which was the point of the two crests, he had carried. It must not therefore be supposed that on the present occasion he yielded very easily. The conflict was long, and for some time doubtful. At length Mrs. Ford perceived that he began to waver; and, pushing her advantage, drove him from his positions one by one, till she extorted a promise that he would consider the matter carefully over. This he did for several days; at length he felt convinced that there was nothing for it but to endow, for Mrs. Ford was determined upon carrying her point; so he gave a reluctant consent. This done, letters were posted off to the Bishop, to acquaint his lordship with Mr. Ford's intentions, and requesting that the consecration might take place on the day first fixed, and that he, with his chaplain, would, on the occasion, pay his promised visit to Weston Hall. By the same post, another letter was forwarded to Mr. Dwyer, announcing to him Mr. Ford's generous pro-

posal with regard to the living, and requesting him to be at Weston in time for the consecration, where, the note added, he would meet the Bishop, and where Mr. and Mrs. Ford hoped he would take up his quarters until he found a residence that suited him. This done, Mrs. Marles, and one or two other neighbours were invited to spend the evening at Weston, where the subject of the consecration was fully discussed, and Mr. Ford's liberal offer excited the warmest applause. A subscription-list was opened among the ladies, to purchase a full suit of canonicals for Mr. Dwyer; and a polite note forwarded to the vicar, intimating that, as Mr. Ford had undertaken to provide the necessary endowment, Mr. Milles' handsome offer was declined.

"Well now," said Mrs. Ford to her friends before their departure, "this is nice: we shall have the consecration on the very day on which it was fixed; we shall have the Bishop, and we shall have dear Mr. Dwyer."



CHAPTER XII.

The Choice of an Incumbent.

A good man ther was of religioun,
That was a poure persone of a toun;
But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche.
His parishens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent.

CHAUCER.

IN our last chapter every thing appeared to be going on in the most satisfactory way, and there seemed to be a very fair prospect of Mrs. Ford's plans being fully carried out. But, alas, all things here are uncertain; and as the finest day is sometimes overclouded, and the bright sun driven away by sudden and dreary storms, so did it happen in the matter before us. Mr. and Mrs. Ford were sitting at breakfast some few days after the transactions mentioned, and were engaged in their now common topic of conversation—the promising prospects of the new church. Miss Croft was listening attentively to the description Mrs. Ford gave of all that would take place at the consecration; and Charles and Rachel were amusing themselves with various surmisings upon the appearance of the Bishop, and the different personages who were invited on the occasion.

“I wonder, mamma,” said Rachel, “whether the Bishop will wear his wig at dinner?”

Charles smiled, while her mother answered,—

“Yes, my dear; his lordship wears his wig on all public occasions; and I am sure the dinner at our house, on the day of consecration, will be a public oc-

casation.—I don't think, Miss Croft, that I mentioned to you that Lord Duberly is coming?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Ann; "you told me that Mr. Ford had invited his lordship."

Miss Croft did not like to say how often Mrs. Ford had told her this.

"And did I tell you," continued her aunt, "that the Honourable and Reverend Robert St. Aubin is expected?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And Mr. and Mrs. Werden?"

"Yes, ma'am; you gave me a list of about thirty persons," said Miss Croft, who began to fear that she should be inflicted with the list again.

"Yes, mamma," exclaimed Rachel, very innocently, "I am sure Miss Croft knows who are coming; for I have heard their names so often, that I can repeat them all off; and Mary Mathison and I have been trying to put them in rhyme; but we could find no good word that would answer to Dwyer."

"Well, my dear," remarked Mrs. Ford, who was not exactly pleased with her child's poetical propensities, at all events in the present instance, "you had better not make rhymes on people's names—it is very rude; and I am quite sure that neither Lord Duberly, nor any of those who are coming, would like it. And, now you remind me of Mr. Dwyer,—I wonder, Mr. Ford," turning to her husband, "that he has not answered your last letter, in which you fixed the day for his coming."

"It is odd," said Mr. Ford; "he is usually so very punctual in answering my letters. I should think he was not at home when my last arrived."

"It surely could not have been lost?" asked Mrs. Ford.

"No," replied her husband ; "such a thing is not probable,—the post-office is now so very well regulated."

"Perhaps we shall have an answer this morning," suggested his wife—"and here I see the post-boy coming up the road with the letter-bag ; so we shall soon know."

In a few minutes the footman entered, the bag was opened, and its contents produced. Mrs. Ford turned them over ; and having satisfied herself that there were none for her, drew near her husband for the purpose of picking up all the news which his large bundle gave promise of. The first he opened was that with the largest seal.

"Dear me !" said his wife, picking up the envelope, and looking at the coronet and supporters, "from Lord Duberly, I suppose ?"

"Yes," said Mr. Ford ; "a very kind note from his lordship," handing it at the same time to his wife, who opened it and read,—

"Lord Duberly presents his compliments to Mr. Ford, will have great pleasure in attending the consecration of the new church at Preston, and will be very happy to meet the Bishop and clergy afterwards at Weston Hall."

Duberly Manor.

"Very civil indeed of his lordship," said Mrs. Ford, as she put down the note ; "I only hope now that the Hon. and Rev. Robert St. Aubin will come ; and we shall have such a nice party."

"I am glad to say," continued Mr. Ford, throwing another note towards her, "that he is coming too."

"Well that is delightful !" exclaimed Mrs. Ford, having finished the note, which was as civil and laconic as the former.

Mrs. Ford raised her eyes to that with which her

husband was then occupied ; the contents of this, as far as she could gather from Mr. Ford's looks, did not appear to afford him as much pleasure as the two former.

" Why, I declare," exclaimed Mrs. Ford, who was well acquainted with the handwriting—" I declare it is from Mr. Dwyer ! is it not ?"

" Yes," said Mr. Ford, his voice less firm than when he had spoken of the other epistles.

This difference Mrs. Ford did not observe, but added, " This is better still ; all now will do ; how well every thing has succeeded !"

" I don't know that," said Mr. Ford, drily, at the same time offering her the letter which he had just read. Her husband's last remark, and the expression apparent in his countenance, which seemed to say pretty plainly, I thought all along that Mr. Dwyer would deceive us, prepared Mrs. Ford for what was coming. It was too true : Mr. Dwyer had heard of a more eligible sphere, as he termed it, and felt obliged, although with the deepest regret, to decline Mr. and Mrs. Ford's most kind offer.

" Upon my word," exclaimed the lady, as soon as she had read the epistle, " this really is too bad. I think it a downright insult to us ; especially to you, my dear," addressing her husband.

" In what way ?" asked Mr. Ford.

" In what way ?" repeated his wife ; " really I am surprised you can ask such a question. Did you not go to Dublin to hear him ; and then, when he came here to preach on trial, did you not borrow a church for him, and shew him every kindness you possibly could ?"

" But, my dear," observed Mr. Ford, " he says he has been offered a more eligible sphere ; and you cannot expect that the man, under such circumstances, should accept this."

"As to being more eligible," said Mrs. Ford, "I can scarcely believe *that*—but we shall see; the time will come, I doubt not, when Mr. Dwyer will regret having refused St. Paul's Church at Preston."

Soon after this, the breakfast-party separated, all evidently much disturbed at the loss of so eloquent a preacher as Mr. Dwyer.

Some few days after the above-mentioned disappointment, Bradwell wishing to see his neighbour upon some matters of business, walked up to Weston Hall. To his inquiry, the servant informed him that Mr. Ford was not at home, but Mrs. Ford was. On entering the house, he was shewn into a room where he found Mrs. Ford and her neighbour Mrs. Marles.

"I am very glad indeed that you have called this morning," said Mrs. Ford; "for we are consulting upon a matter in which, perhaps, you may be of great service to us."

Mr. Bradwell expressed his willingness to do any thing in his power to oblige them.

"You know," continued Mrs. Ford, "the great loss we have sustained at the new church in Mr. Dwyer?"

"I have heard," said Bradwell, "that he declines to accept it."

"It is too true," replied the lady—"he does not come; and we are now consulting who shall have the church. Can you assist us at all by recommending a clergyman?"

"You had better apply to the Bishop," said Bradwell.

"No," replied the lady, "we do not like *that*."

"To the vicar, then?" he suggested.

"No, that will not do," answered Mrs. Ford; "we must have one of our own choice. Now cannot you;

among your large circle of clerical acquaintance, tell us of a nice person that would do?"

"It is a very responsible office," said Bradwell, "to give advice in these cases; but if I mentioned any name, it would be that of Mr. Hall, the curate of the parish church."

"Mr. Hall!" exclaimed both the ladies at once, "Mr. Hall! why you don't call him a popular preacher, do you?"

"Perhaps not a popular preacher, as the term is commonly understood," said Bradwell; "but he is a zealous, active clergyman; and I must confess, if it be proper to speak, even in approval, of a clergyman's sermons, that I like them very much; they appear to be always the result of deep thought, great piety, and practical experience; they are such as are calculated to arrest the attention of the learned, and yet level to the capacity of the most unlettered."

"Well," said Mrs. Marles, "I never before heard so much said in praise of Mr. Hall's sermons; and must confess I look upon them in a very different light. I think them very stupid and tame, nothing exciting about them, nothing to stir one up; and besides, I have a greater objection still, I don't think they are *gospel*."

"What do you mean?" asked Bradwell in some surprise.

"I mean," replied Mrs. Marles, "that I don't think Mr. Hall preaches the *gospel*."

"My good lady," said Bradwell, "you must forgive me for speaking seriously upon this matter. You are taking a very dangerous position in thus censuring your clergyman. You are accusing him who, under the Lord, is set over you to teach you the very things upon which you are sitting in judgment. By accusing

him of error, therefore, you are presuming to teach your teacher,—a mode of proceeding by no means consonant to what is usually considered right. You must also observe, that in saying he does not preach the gospel, you are convicting him as guilty of a very great sin, viz. of teaching heresy. Now, pray, forgive me, Mrs. Marles, for requesting you to think seriously upon what you have said. Such words as these you have uttered may be attended with incalculable evil, not merely to the person of whom they are spoken, but to the Church at large."

"Indeed," replied Mrs. Marles, "I do not see how such can be the case; but you are such a bigot, Mr. Bradwell, that you find out, by some means or other, that every thing said against a clergyman is injurious to the whole Church. But now, just tell me why I have not a right to sit in judgment, as you call it, on Mr. Hall's hum-drum sermons?"

"In the first place," said Bradwell, "were you even competent to decide upon deep points of theology, it is not your office as an individual lay woman, to sit in judgment on your priest, and peremptorily decide as to his orthodoxy. But, of course, it would be too much to say that you are competent; for, without the slightest disparagement to your talents or acquirements, I feel sure you cannot suppose that you are capable of deciding upon points which require very great learning, both as to the original languages in which the Scriptures were written, biblical criticism, and church-history. You must therefore forgive me for saying that you are by no means a fit person for the office you have undertaken. If in your opinion Mr. Hall be really guilty of heresy, the Bishop should be informed of it, that proper cognisance be taken of so serious a thing. If he be not

guilty,—which I cannot for one moment suppose him to be, his sermons always appearing to me to be in strict agreement with the holy Scriptures and our Liturgy,—then you have done a great injustice to an innocent man, and—”

“No, no,” exclaimed Mrs. Marles; “no more of your *ands*. I see by your face that you have a string of reasons a yard long to prove that Mr. Hall is strictly orthodox, and that I know nothing about it; so, if you please, we will say no more of him.—*You* don’t like his sermons, do you, Mrs. Ford?” said the widow, turning to her friend.

“No, indeed,” repeated that lady; “it is quite ridiculous to talk of him. Is there any other clergyman you can mention?”

Bradwell said he knew several clergymen whom he thought would make most excellent pastors of the flock to be assigned to the new district; but he was afraid that Mrs. Ford would not approve of them, as their opinions on great points coincided with Mr. Hall.

“What do you think, Mr. Bradwell,” asked Mrs. Marles, “of Mr. Raby, the curate at Eaton?”

“I have every reason to believe him to be a most zealous and valuable clergyman,” answered Bradwell.

“Oh, but, my dear Mrs. Marles,” said Mrs. Ford, “how can you expect we should take Mr. Raby? He is as tame as Mr. Hall—preaches and reads the prayers just like a school-boy. I don’t like him at all; he does not edify one. Oh, I do so grieve we’ve lost dear Dwyer, whose reading is as good as most men’s preaching! Did you ever hear Dwyer, Mr. Bradwell?”

“Yes,” replied Bradwell.

“And did you like him?”

“I have a dislike,” said Bradwell, “to talk about

liking clergymen's preaching ; but, as you ask me, I answer that I did not like him."

"Why not?" persevered Mrs. Ford.

"I thought him irreverent," said Bradwell, "considering the place where he was, and the subject he was treating."

"Perhaps," remarked Mrs. Marles, "you don't like his *action*? some persons, I know, object to action."

"I should scarcely have observed that," replied Bradwell ; "although I must confess I do not like very much action, as you call it, in the pulpit. Perhaps I am wrong, but it appears to me almost bordering on the profane, to make the church a place for display, and preaching the gospel an opportunity for oratory ; I confess I like what is termed quiet preaching."

"What," asked Mrs. Ford, "would you have a man go through his sermon as a school-boy drawls through his lesson?"

"No," replied Bradwell, "I would not have that ; I should wish it to be evident to all, that he was not uninterested in his discourse. He should be intent upon what he was engaged in, and should evince an anxiety to persuade his hearers to receive the message he delivers ; but with this, I would wish to see an apparent sense of the awful import of his subject, and an absence of all meretricious ornament, as beneath the high and holy things of which he treats."

"That is," said Mrs. Ford, "you admire Mr. Raby's preaching?"

"As I said before," remarked Bradwell, "I do not like talking about admiring or disliking preachers ; but I certainly see nothing in Mr. Raby's preaching to dislike ; his sermons appear to be always plain, pious, and practical."

"It may be so," continued Mrs. Ford; "but I do not like them at all,—they want life and talent. I don't think Mr. Raby a very *talented* man."

"Perhaps not," said Bradwell. "I have had no opportunity of judging of his talents; I only know him a zealous, painstaking clergyman; and such is the description of persons whom I should suppose you are in search of for the new church."

"Of course," observed Mrs. Ford, "we must have a zealous, painstaking man; but we must also have a man of talent. Mr. Ford has given 1000*l.* for the endowment; and we are entitled, I think, to have a man of talent. There will be a very good income at the new church."

"Indeed!" said Bradwell, "I am very glad to hear it; as, from what Mr. Milles told me, I was afraid the income would have been but small."

"I really do not know what Mr. Milles calls small," observed Mrs. Ford, evidently annoyed; "*he* perhaps may call it small; and so it is, compared to the fat livings which he and some others possess."

Bradwell did not interrupt the lady in this last remark, although he could have shewn her that Mr. Milles' income was not so fat as she appeared to think it.

Mrs. Ford continued: "Small, indeed! it will not be small at all. First, there is Mr. Ford's 1000*l.*; and then the pew-rents, which, with a popular preacher, will all let; and then there's the churchyard, which will bring in a good round sum."

"The churchyard!" repeated Bradwell, surprised at this last source of income to the new incumbent; "why, my dear madam, the churchyard is a very small piece of land; and even supposing the clergyman were to let it to some butcher or farmer for grazing—which I sin-

cerely hope he would not do ; but even if he did, it would scarcely feed one sheep, and could not therefore increase his income above a few shillings."

Mrs. Ford could scarcely wait the conclusion of Bradwell's observation, when she added, "Feed a sheep! no, indeed: if that was all that a churchyard was worth to a clergyman, I agree with you, he would not derive much income from it. I am not thinking of that: I mean, it will bring him in a large income from burials. All the neighbouring churchyards are full; he will therefore have nothing to compete with besides the cemetery; and if he is a wise man, he will put his fees at threepence lower than theirs, and then he will soon settle the cemetery."

Bradwell felt shocked at this mercenary mode of treating the burying of the dead, although at first he could scarcely refrain from a smile, so earnest was Mrs. Ford in pointing out the pecuniary advantages of her churchyard, as she was accustomed to call it. Anxious, however, to learn what the lady's ideas of a clergyman's large income were, he asked what the sum was she calculated the churchyard to be worth.

"Why, Mr. Ford and myself," she replied, "sat down yesterday and made our calculations; and at the very least, we made it out to be worth 30*l.* a year. Well, there is 30*l.*, you see, for the churchyard; 35*l.* for interest on Mr. Ford's 1000*l.*; and I should say, that if all the pews were let, they would bring in 50*l.* more. So, you see, the income is not bad; and I really think we are justified in expecting to have a very talented man."

"I wish not to say that the income is bad," said Bradwell, "nor to express any doubts as to your obtaining the services of a talented man. With regard to the first, I only wish to gain possession of a fact; and

as to the second, I believe there are many talented clergymen, who esteem the value of a living by the prospects of doing good which it opens to them, rather than the amount of money it brings. You say, then, that the income of the new church, at its best estate, will be 115*l.* per annum to a popular preacher. Out of this he will have to pay 25*l.* per annum for a house, and, I think I heard, 10*l.* to the clerk; leaving him 80*l.* a year to maintain himself and, if married, wife and children."

Mrs. Ford did not much like the quiet way in which Bradwell summed up the total, and observed, "Well, perhaps 80*l.* a year is not a very large sum for a clergyman; but, indeed, I do not see how it could be mended. I wish, Mr. Bradwell, you would devise some means of raising clergymen's incomes."

"It is to be done, madam," remarked Bradwell, "in a very simple way."

"How?" asked Mrs. Ford, apparently much interested.

"By the laity," said Bradwell, "doing their duty. In former days men did not neglect this matter as much as they do now; they did not give to God of that which cost them nothing; they did not build cheap churches, nor defraud His priests: they brought their wealth, and gave it with joy and thankfulness in God's service. Times are altered; men now-a-days spend all upon themselves; luxury and covetousness have swept over the land; tastes and fancies must be indulged—houses built, furniture bought, horses, carriages, clothes, and all of the most costly description: God, His service and His ministers, come in for the refuse; and even this is, as it were, extorted—charity-sermons, public meetings, long lists of charitable names, all obliged to be put in requisition; and the very graves in which the

dead are buried, made matters of calculation for a clergyman's income. You will forgive me, Mrs. Ford, for speaking strongly on this head ; I feel more than I like to express."

Mrs. Ford remarked that he had said quite enough ; and as Bradwell was afraid of offending her by saying more, he took his departure.

" Well," said Mrs. Marles, as soon as he was gone, " I never heard such a man as that in my life. I'm sure he's going religious mad ; oh, he's shocking, positively shocking ! Did you hear what he said of cheap churches and charity-sermons ?"

" That I did," said Mrs. Ford ; " quite personal ; I thought it."

" Yes," added Mrs. Marles ; " and about expenses and churchyards ?"

" I heard it all," said Mrs. Ford, rather pettishly ; " and, indeed, he was so abominably rude, that I think I shall not ask him to Weston again."

Mrs. Marles saw that her friend had a clear and distinct perception of all that had been said, and, moreover, was fully impressed that Bradwell's remarks had been intended as personal insults to herself : she thought it therefore as well to take her leave, and allow Mrs. Ford full time to ruminate upon what she had heard.



CHAPTER XIII.

The Young Conbert.

The gospel-creed, a sword of strife,
Meek hands alone may rear;
And even zeal begins its life
In silent thought and fear.

Lyra Apostolica.

WE must now carry on our tale some few years from the date of the events which were detailed in the preceding chapter, during which time the new church was consecrated by the name of St. Paul, and an incumbent found, who, in most respects, answered the sanguine expectations of Mrs. Ford. He was pious, talented, and eloquent, and very attentive to his duties; but unfortunately brought with him some of those lax views upon Church-principles, which, we are happy to say, were more common seven years since than they are at present.

Henry Howard, now grown up a young man, was in partnership with Bradwell, having conducted himself during the whole of his residence with his godfather in a satisfactory way. Charles Ford, whom we have said was about Henry's age, had been for some time at Cambridge; where, although not living in confirmed depravity, his principles were so weak, that he fell under most of the temptations which assailed him. The general course of his life during the early part of his career at the university had been unsteady; and during the vacations he brought home with him so much slang in his common conversation, and such an apparent indifference and irreverence to sacred things, that Henry, who on many accounts entertained regard

for him, found it desirable to curtail his visits at Weston, and to see as little as possible of his early friend.

Charles continued in this course for about two years, when an event occurred which had a great influence upon his character. He was hunting one day, when his horse, in going over a fence, came down, and falling upon his leg, broke it in two places. He was removed from the field in which the accident happened, to the nearest farm-house, where he remained for three months without once leaving his bed. At first the surgeon who attended him had serious fears for his life, from the height to which the fever ran; but at length the inflammation was got under; and Charles heard, with much thankfulness, there was every prospect of his recovery, if he would remain quiet, and attend to the directions he received. During his long and tedious illness he had much opportunity for reflection, the result of which was, that he became fully convinced of the great folly and wickedness he had hitherto been guilty of, and firmly resolved, if God should spare his life, to pass his time in a very different way.

As soon as he was sufficiently recovered, he was removed from the farm-house to Cambridge, where he remained a short time, and then travelled by easy stages to Weston. Here he stayed during a whole summer, and had full opportunity of beginning that new course he had determined to pursue. Mr. Fitzhugh, the incumbent, was frequently at Weston; and in a short time a great intimacy sprung up between him and Charles. At his suggestion young Ford became at once a teacher in the Sunday-school, and a district-visitor; in this latter capacity he was in the habit of reading and expounding the Scriptures in the different cottages where he visited; and in a short time became so popular among the poor, that his evening lectures were

better attended than those of Mr. Fitzhugh himself. On his first coming from Cambridge, Henry Howard called upon him, and was much pleased with the alteration which had taken place in Charles's mind: he heard the whole circumstances connected with his accident,—the fears he had entertained, and the resolutions he had formed, during illness. In a few days Henry saw him again, when he said that he felt stronger in his resolutions than ever, and was determined to commence at once as district-visitor and Sunday-school teacher.

“ If I might venture to give advice in such a case,” said Henry, “ it would be, that you should wait some little time, at all events, before you enter upon these very responsible offices. You must remember, Charles, that it is but a short time since you were giving way to various kinds of dissipation and wickedness. You are now, doubtless, sincere in your hatred of such things, and in your determination to avoid them for the future; but we are all of us frail, uncertain creatures, and but too apt to neglect the good resolutions we form. Will it not be better, therefore, that you should try yourself a little, and see, as well as you can, how far you are likely to carry out these good intentions? You require some self-discipline; practise this for a time, and then you will have a better insight into yourself, and be more able to judge as to the course you will follow hereafter. Remember, if you should fall away after undertaking these duties—which I sincerely trust may not be the case; but if it should, your fall would not only be disastrous to yourself, but would prove a stumbling-block to others, and bring loss to them. I might also speak of the defective views of divine truth, which, under your circumstances, you cannot but entertain, and which of itself ought to make you pause; but I would hope my former reasons are sufficient.”

To all this Charles answered, that he felt satisfied he should not fall; he had talked the matter over with Mr. Fitzhugh, and was quite sure that he was called, he might say in a miraculous manner, to serve God, and was determined to commence at once in the way he proposed.

Henry said, that indeed his call, if he liked to speak of the change brought about during his late accident under that name, was in one sense miraculous—that is, it had, by God's goodness, produced thoughts which could never have come without the preventing grace of God; but although such was the case, it afforded no assurance that he would not fall again, nor did it at all justify him in undertaking an office of considerable responsibility, which required a maturity of judgment and steadfastness of purpose, rarely, if ever, found in young converts.

"Well," said Charles, "I know you too well to doubt your sincerity, or I might suspect that you were among those old-fashioned High Churchmen, who talk a great deal, and do nothing; but you must forgive me for saying, that you are still old-fashioned, lamentably beset with prejudices, and very unfit to cope with the threatening evils of the present day."

"Perhaps so," said Henry, mildly; "but the day may come when it will be admitted that these prejudices, as you call them, are the only weapons that can safely and effectually be used in the impending conflict between good and evil."

Some few days after the above conversation, Rachel Ford, with Miss Croft, went to spend the evening with the Bradwells; and among other topics discussed was Charles's accident, and the effects produced by it upon his mind.

"We are quite delighted," said Rachel, "to see

such a change come over him. Often and often mamma and myself have been quite miserable at the way in which we feared he was spending his time at Cambridge; for besides the evil course in which we heard he was living, his letters were written in such a careless, worldly spirit, that we felt sure he was extremely wicked. And so it proved to be; for, at his illness, it all came out. You may, therefore, well imagine how delighted we are at the change."

"Yes," said Mrs. Bradwell, "it must indeed be a comfort to you, to know that he has left off a sinful course, and is resolved now upon leading a better life."

"Oh, I can assure you," said Rachel, "his conversion is most wonderful. Don't you think so?" addressing Mr. Bradwell, who was sitting a silent listener to her remarks.

"I scarcely like to talk much of these matters," said Bradwell; "but it is always delightful to hear of any one 'ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well.'"

"Oh, but I love to talk of it," said Rachel; "I like all the world to know what a changed character Charles is. I'm sure it's so wonderful, that I quite believe in the old saying, 'the greater the sinner, the greater the saint.'"

"Stop," said Bradwell, seriously; "you must not assert so dreadful a doctrine as that uncontradicted; I am sure, my dear Rachel, you cannot believe the truth of that most shocking saying."

"I don't know," replied Rachel, "I cannot say that I do not believe it; on the contrary, I have seen so many delightful instances of great sinners being suddenly converted, that I am very much disposed to think it true."

"It is true, indeed," said Bradwell, "that many wicked persons have been brought to repentance by

God's goodness, and have afterwards led good and holy lives; but this is no proof that they would not have lived better, if they had never fallen into sin as deeply as they did. Nay, we may say that as sin has the effect of quenching God's Holy Spirit within us, and of darkening our conscience, so a person who has deeply sinned is never likely to attain that clear insight into heavenly things, which appears to belong, I may say, almost exclusively, to those who from their youth up have obeyed God's commandments, and followed His will."

"I am very sorry," observed Miss Croft, who had hitherto made no remark, but appeared now to be apprehensive lest Bradwell's words should take effect upon her cousin—"I am very sorry to say that I cannot at all agree with you. Surely there never was a person that lived without sin, who obeyed God's commandments from his youth; it is therefore idle to talk of such a thing."

"True," said Bradwell, "no man ever yet lived without sin, save, indeed, the Son of man, who was more than man; but surely one man sins more than another; and although every sin, as we know with regard to the first sin on earth, deserves death, yet there are different degrees of sin."

Miss Croft said she doubted that.

"If not, as you will not deny that Charles Ford, converted as he is, is still 'a sinner,' in what respect is he better now than before?—But it is not well," continued Bradwell, "to dive too deeply into these matters, which in a great measure are hidden from us; from the difference of punishments, however, awarded to different sins among the Jews, by the law given to them,—a difference recognised by our blessed Lord,—we may surely say there are different degrees of sin; besides, you must allow that the man who commits the

same sin a hundred times is a sinner to a greater degree than the one who commits it five times."

"Yes," answered Miss Croft; "I will allow that."

"Well," continued Bradwell, "my assertion is simply this, that the man who has committed sin a hundred times is in a worse state than the man who has committed it five times; that he has a greater ground to retrace, and has more difficulties in his way; and, supposing his degree of repentance the same, is less likely to become a perfect Christian within the same period."

"I cannot admit it," said Ann; "I imagine that the change takes place at once."

"Do you think, then," asked Bradwell, "that a person who has been living in the indulgence of sin, who is habitually guilty of different transgressions against God's law—that such an one, if aroused from his fearful state by some sudden calamity or other alarm, is likely in an instant to become possessed of a full stock of Christian graces? Do you think that evil habits, which perhaps have been growing for years, are all to be eradicated in one moment, and good habits to take their place?"

"Yes," replied Ann; "I think that God is able to do this, and more than this, to the person that repents."

"Of course," answered Bradwell, "you do not, I hope, for a moment suppose that I should dare to restrict God's omnipotency, or to say that He could not in a moment transpose the vilest sinner into the most exalted saint. Nay, we have instances of His doing so, in some respects, under very extraordinary circumstances. I am not, therefore, speaking upon this point; I conceive it would be presumption to do so; but I ask whether, in accordance with God's usual dealings towards mankind, it is the general rule that a great sinner shall at once,

upon a call, as you would term it, become an exalted saint?"

"We are none of us saints," said Ann, quickly.

"In one sense we are not," said Bradwell, mildly; "for there is no man living who sinneth not; but in another sense we surely are. Was not St. Paul a saint; was not St. Peter, and St. John?"

"Yes," said Ann; "but we are not Apostles."

"No," replied Bradwell, "but we are men, and so were they; and although under different circumstances, we can attain to Christian perfection as well as they. We have still Christ's promise as they had; His Spirit is still within us; and if we would make use of the means of grace which Christ has provided for us in His Church, I see not but that we, in our degree, might lead the lives of saints, as did the holy Apostles. I suppose," continued Bradwell, with a saddened smile, "you will not admit those to be saints whom the Church commemorates as such."

"No," said Ann, "I admit no traditionary saints."

"Well," observed Bradwell, "I fear it will be useless to prolong the conversation on this head, as our opinions appear to run in such very contrary directions; but viewing, as I do, the commencement of the Christian life as taking place at baptism, after which every wilful sin committed, stains us, as it were, and removes us further from God and the love of His Christ, I cannot but think that the more we sin, the deeper should be our repentance, the more urgent our prayers, and the lower our place in the household of God. It is with the deepest apprehensions that I see young converts exalted high among God's people; and I only pray, that in the particular instance which introduced this conversation, it may please God to preserve him from those evils I so greatly fear."

CHAPTER XIV.

Unity, visible or invisible ?

One only way to life ;
One faith deliver'd once for all ;
One holy band, endow'd with Heaven's high call ;
One earnest, endless strife ;—
This is the Church th' Eternal fram'd of old.

Lyra Apostolica.

TIME went on, and Charles Ford by degrees became more and more wedded to the opinions he had embraced, and more confirmed in the practices he had commenced. After taking his degrees at Cambridge, he spent most of his time at Weston ; and, not satisfied with his offices of Sunday - school teacher and district - visitor, commenced that of itinerant preacher, and was a regular speaker at most of the public meetings held by dissenting societies. Mr. Fitzhugh did not exactly like the turn affairs were taking, and once or twice ventured to remonstrate with his young convert upon the ill effects that might result from his holding meetings in St. Paul's district for public prayer and preaching.

" The ignorant," said Mr. Fitzhugh, " will not understand the difference betwixt your office and mine ; and they will then be led on to regard the dissenting chapel in the same light as they do the church, and divide their attendance between the two."

" And pray," asked Charles, " what ill effects will result, even if they do so ?"

" Why," replied Mr. Fitzhugh, " it is better that they should go to church than to a dissenting chapel. The Church is the established religion of the country, and therefore people certainly ought to attend church."

“ But Dissenters are tolerated by the laws of the land,” replied Charles ; “ and if so, I cannot see that a man acts contrary to the laws by attending their places of worship.”

“ Not contrary to the laws,” said Mr. Fitzhugh ; “ but still he would act more in accordance with the laws if he attended the church.”

“ It may be so,” observed Charles ; “ but at all events, I cannot think that such a very slight evil—if it be an evil—should be held sufficient to prevent people from reaping the good which undoubtedly they do by attending dissenting places of worship. And least of all should a mere apprehension of an uncertain danger be brought forward to prevent a person like myself, belonging to the Church, from doing all the benefit he can do to the population around him.”

Mr. Fitzhugh discovered that his young friend was not to be driven very easily from the position he had taken, and therefore said little more upon the subject. In the mean time Charles continued to preach at his weekly lecture, and earned great notoriety for his skill in public speaking, and the great zeal he displayed in the cause of religious freedom.

Some few months after the date of the above conversation, a change came over the young convert. He began, first of all, to discontinue his attendance at the great Protestant meetings, or when he did attend, declined to speak ; his weekly lectures were occasionally dropped ; and Bradwell, to whom this information was conveyed, began to suspect that a reaction had taken place in Charles’s mind, and that he was about to relinquish his energetic exertions, simply from being tired of a pursuit undertaken without a due consideration of the labour entailed.

A conversation which took place at Weston at this

period will, however, disclose the true reasons for Charles's conduct. Mr. Fitzhugh had been dining with the Fords; and the subject of conversation, during the evening, turned upon the nature and state of the Church.

"I wish to know your opinion, Mr. Fitzhugh," said Miss Croft, "on the meaning of the unity of the Church; as," she added, "Charles and myself have had a discussion during the morning upon this point."

Mr. Fitzhugh answered, that there were various ways in which the unity of the Church was understood.

"But which is the right one?" asked Charles, with a degree of impatience which surprised his friend; "are we to understand, first of all, that unity is essential?"

"Certainly, in one sense," said Mr. Fitzhugh.

"In what sense?" inquired Charles. Mr. Fitzhugh hesitated. "Are we to consider as essential a visible or an invisible unity?" continued Charles.

"Not a visible unity," replied Mr. Fitzhugh; "for we may look in vain for *it* in the Church; and therefore, if a visible unity be essential to the Church, we may say at once the Church has ceased."

"Besides," interrupted Miss Croft, "if a visible unity were essential, what would become of those in even our own country whom we allow to belong to the Church? For example, the Church of Scotland (which is not in visible unity with the Church of England), and the Dissenters of all denominations."

"I cannot help the case of the Scottish Establishment, nor that of the Dissenters," said Charles; "I have always been taught hitherto to consider them as belonging to the Church quite as much as ourselves—that is, I have always thought that, although they did not belong to the Church of England as established by law,

yet they did belong to the Catholic Church of Christ ; but I must confess that now I begin to doubt it, and I am determined to sift the matter to the bottom."

" Well," said Miss Croft, smiling, " I do not fear but that we shall fully satisfy you. Then you admit, Mr. Fitzhugh," turning to that gentleman—" you admit that there is no visible unity in the Church."

" Certainly not," said Mr. Fitzhugh ; " it is impossible to admit such a doctrine."

" What is the unity ?" asked Charles.

" An invisible one," replied Mr. Fitzhugh.

" What, then," asked Charles, " constitutes this unity ?"

" A belief," replied the incumbent, " in the grand fundamental doctrines of Christianity."

" And what are the fundamental doctrines of Christianity ?" asked Charles again, rather impatiently.

" What are they ?" repeated Mr. Fitzhugh, evidently at some loss for an answer,—then adding, " They are contained in the Apostles' Creed."

" *That* some of the Dissenters will not agree to," said Charles ; " but admit that they would, who is to interpret the meaning of the creed ?"

" I do not imagine," replied Mr. Fitzhugh, " there would be much difficulty in that. Surely every one can understand the meaning of the words used in the Apostles' Creed."

" Perhaps so," said Charles ; " but men interpret those words differently. For example, the point we are now touching upon, the nature of the Church : all who repeat the Creed say, ' I believe in the holy Catholic Church,' and yet very different opinions are held hereupon."

" No *essential* differences," remarked Mr. Fitzhugh, emphatically.

"I don't understand your fine-drawn distinctions of non-essential and essential differences," said Charles. "I must say, that I think the different opinions held upon this article of the creed are by no means non-essential."

Mr. Fitzhugh was sorry to differ from his young friend; but he could not, he said, consider them essential.

"What do you say, then," asked Charles, "to the sense put upon this article by the Church of Rome,—do you consider *that* an essential difference from the sense you would put upon it?"

"Perhaps it might be in such a case," replied Mr. Fitzhugh; "but we are not talking now of the Roman Catholics: they admit no right of private judgment; and therefore they, of course, have nothing to do with our present argument."

"I cannot agree with you there," said Charles: "a Roman Catholic has as much right to know the truth as you or I; and I want to know in what way he is to discover whether he or you are right in the interpretation of this article, since you differ upon it, and that essentially."

"I cannot take the case of a Roman Catholic into our present consideration," observed Mr. Fitzhugh: "they are decidedly wrong,—there cannot be two opinions upon that point."

"Of course," said Charles, "I do not mean to say they are not wrong; I only want to know how they are to be set right. But since you will not allow me to bring forward Roman Catholics in the discussion, I will go to the Protestant Dissenters; and I would ask you first, whether you do not think that some of them hold a different interpretation from what you do, upon this article of the creed?"

Mr. Fitzhugh admitted they did.

"Well, then," said Charles, "I repeat, do you think the articles of the creed essential or not—are we to believe them or not?"

Mr. Fitzhugh said, he did not exactly like the pointed way in which this question was put.

Charles replied, he only wished to arrive at truth; and he must again ask, whether Mr. Fitzhugh considered the articles of the creed essential or not?

"Why," said Mr. Fitzhugh, "if you put the question in that straight-forward way, I must answer, that I do consider them essential."

"As Dissenters and Churchmen, then," said Charles, "do differ upon the meaning of the creed, they differ upon the fundamental doctrines of Christianity; therefore I do not see how your idea of the invisible unity will stand. There is no unity at all in such a case; besides," he added, warmly, "I do not see how, upon this ground, any man can be sure of the truth of the opinions he holds. If there be only an invisible unity, where is the authority to go to for guidance in disputed points?"

"To the creeds," said Fitzhugh.

"But," added Charles, "we have settled that point; the creeds doubtless are of the very greatest service to us in the investigation after truth; but still they are not in all cases sufficient, as the differences among men, which I have spoken of, fully prove. Let us take a common case, even at the risk of wearying you, by going partly over the ground we have just travelled. Suppose that I, in search after truth, am directed to the Apostles' Creed, which I accept; but after consideration, refuse to admit the usual interpretation put upon some one particular article of it. Suppose I am told what the opinion of the Church all along has been upon that

article ; but I still do not choose to receive the sense thus put upon it,—what am I to do ?”

“ In such a case,” said Fitzhugh, “ there would be a difficulty ; but I do not conceive an insuperable one.”

“ How would you get over it ?” inquired Charles.

“ I would,” replied Mr. Fitzhugh—“ I would advise a person in such a case,—supposing that the real sense of antiquity could be obtained, which I much doubt,—but in such a case, if it could, I should advise the man who differed from it, to pray earnestly and perseveringly ; and I have no doubt but that he would be led into truth.”

“ But,” asked Charles, “ do you suppose that Dissenters, who profess to differ conscientiously from the doctrines of the Church of England, which I imagine you will admit holds the creeds in the sense in which they have always been held,—do you suppose, I ask, that conscientious Dissenters do not pray to be led into truth ?”

“ Yes, I believe they do,” replied Mr. Fitzhugh ; “ and I doubt not but that their prayers are heard and answered.”

“ I should be very sorry indeed,” observed Charles, “ to say they were not ; but I certainly cannot think they are answered in that way which your words would seem to imply they are, viz. that he who thus prays is guided into truth, for he still holds a different interpretation of the creed, that is, a different creed from that which has been held from the first. I would ask you one more question : If God has given ordinary means by which men may arrive at a knowledge of the truth, is it reasonable to expect that He should give extraordinary means ? Nay, if a man rejects the means that God gives, and endeavours to find out the truth in some

other way than in that which God has appointed, would you not say that he was guilty of great presumption, and little likely to accomplish the object of his search?"

Mr. Fitzhugh said, these were difficult questions to answer; and he should like to talk them over when they had more time, and would be less liable to interruption.

Charles said, that any time would suit him, and the sooner the better, as he was most anxious to arrive at a clear understanding upon the subject. With these words he left the room.

As soon as he was gone, Miss Croft expressed the greatest surprise at the remarks Charles had made. "Really," she said, "I cannot understand what has happened to him; he is certainly very much changed of late."

"Indeed he is," observed Mr. Fitzhugh; "it was but a few weeks ago that he argued with me, for a long time, upon the bigotry and exclusiveness of the Church, which, he said, treated Dissenters in a very antichristian and uncharitable spirit; and then declared, that he saw no possible objection to a person becoming a Dissenter; and that if he was in a place where he did not like the clergyman, he should certainly attend a dissenting place of worship."

"I think," said Rachel, who was no inattentive listener to what had been going on,— "I think, perhaps, that I can partly explain the cause of the change that has taken place in Charles. I have seen him several times lately with Mr. M'Adams, our Roman Catholic neighbour; and I know that Charles has held some very long conversations with him, and has borrowed several of his books."

"What a dreadful thing!" exclaimed Ann.

"Very dreadful indeed," said Mr. Fitzhugh. "I

don't know what we must do. Really that M'Adams is a very dangerous man; he has already, since my coming to St. Paul's, made three of my people converts to their horrid superstition."

Rachel agreed that it was very dreadful. "And I am sure," she added, "it is not possible to turn Charles now; for he told me yesterday that he had been asking Mr. M'Adams, whether the statements made last week at the great Protestant meeting were true; and that Mr. M'Adams had convinced him there were very many falsehoods uttered; 'so many,' said Charles, 'that I begin to think there was very little truth.'"

Mr. Fitzhugh replied, that this was very extraordinary, as all the statements were well authenticated, and the most important of them were made on the authority either of persons who had witnessed the facts alleged, or of published works.

"Well," said Rachel, "I am not able myself to enter into the subject, but am certainly afraid that poor Charles is far gone on the road to Popery."

CHAPTER XV.

Boubts.

But by the way there is a great quicksand,
And a whirlpoole of hidden jeopardy;
Therefore, Sir Palmer, keepe an even hand;
For twixt them both the narrow way doth ly.

SPENSER.

For some weeks Charles went on in his usual way; once or twice he endeavoured to draw Mr. Fitzhugh into conversation, but they could so little agree upon the premises on which to discuss the question between them, that there was slight prospect of their ever arriving at

a satisfactory conclusion, so the subject was mutually dropped. In the mean while Charles gradually withdrew himself from his district-visiting and the Sunday-school, and spent the greater portion of his time either in reading the books that Mr. M'Adams put into his hands,—all of which had for their object the bringing converts to the Church of Rome,—or in conversation with that gentleman, who left no means untried of gaining so earnest a convert. Mr. and Mrs. Ford heard of the fears entertained by their incumbent, and others who were acquainted with the state of Charles's mind, at first with a degree of astonishment, which prevented their fully believing the possibility of such a thing. In a little time, however, Mr. Ford became so far sensible of it, as to think it not only possible, but highly probable; and as he admitted that every man had a right to choose his own religion, although, as he said, he scarcely thought this permission extended so far as to allow of a man becoming a Catholic, yet he preferred, on the whole, to adhere to his great principle, and did not give himself much further trouble on the subject. Occasionally he spoke to Charles, and told him he had better mind what he was about, or the Papists would prove too cunning for him, and recommended him to read Fox's Book of Martyrs, which he said would cure him, if any thing could. Mrs. Ford, after her first surprise had somewhat subsided, became very angry, and then most resolute in her determination to argue the point with her son, and convince him of his errors. In pursuance of this object, she called to her assistance Mr. Fitzhugh and Mrs. Marles. Charles, however, was no mean match for the trio, and drove them from their positions, one by one, till he proved to demonstration, that if every one had a right to interpret the Scriptures in his own way,—one of the chief points of

discussion between them,—all forms of religion which professed to take the Scriptures for their guide were equally true, and, as many of them contradicted each other, all could not be right, and therefore, as he said, the probability was, that all were false. “You may talk on the subject,” said Charles, “for a year, but as long as you tell me that every man has a right to his own interpretation of the Scriptures, you make the Scriptures useless for all practical purposes ; and as for truth, amid all the discordances your system produces, I know not where to seek it. Again, with regard to the fears you entertain of my becoming a Roman Catholic, which, I must admit, are so far well grounded, as that I am in search of truth among them, which I have been unable to discover among you ; with regard to this, I do not see how, upon your principle, I can be blamed. I have always been taught,—Mr. Fitzhugh can verify this assertion,—that although it was better to belong to the established religion, yet there was no moral wrong in joining any body of Christians who held the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. I have been taught, also, to consider the fundamental doctrines as embodied in the Apostles’ Creed. Now, the Roman Catholics hold the Apostles’ Creed, and therefore, according to your own assertions, hold the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Why, then, is it worse for me to join the Church of Rome than any other sect that differs from the Established Church ? I confess I am very much surprised at the weak arguments used by you in this case, which appear to me to have no solid foundation in them, as also at the illiberal and bigoted way in which you, of all persons professing, as you do, full religious toleration, are accustomed to act.” Such was the sum of the usual replies made by Charles to the united attacks of his mother and her two assistants ; to which but little was

commonly answered, save the dreadful danger there was in such cunning reasoning, which they said they were sure came from the Jesuits, and that if Mr. M'Adams had put it into Charles's head, there could be little doubt but that he was in correspondence with the Pope, and employed to convert him. Charles generally laughed at this, and told them that he really knew not to where he should be carried in his search after truth—perhaps to Rome, but he was fully determined to follow it out, carry him where it would.*

Upon Rachel the effects of these discussions were most distressing. She was a clever shrewd girl, and heard enough from her brother to convince her that, at all events, his opponents were wrong. She had not indeed an idea that he was right. Miss Croft had taken very good care to instil into her mind such a hatred of every thing catholic, as she was wont to call all connected with the Church of Rome, that there was but a slight chance of her thinking Charles to be right. The Pope was, to her mind, the very Antichrist himself, their worship nothing but the grossest and most debased idolatry, and the chief object of their church at large was the utter extermination of all Protestants, root and branch, by fire and sword. Her hatred and dread of the Roman Catholic tenets was, therefore, very great and sincere; and it was with the liveliest feelings of regret that she contemplated the prospect of her brother's leaving the Church of England, and going over to that of Rome. She was, literally, at sea, without rudder to guide, or anchor to fix, and knew not what she ought to believe, or to do. Charles had shewn her that the common arguments used in favour of the Church of England were unsound, and she had no belief in the Church of Rome.

There was, at this time, on a visit at Weston, a gen-

tleman of the name of Campbell, a Socinian, who often entered freely into the religious discussions that took place, and who, admitting the truth of the Scriptures, and professing to hold the fundamental doctrines contained in them, appeared to Rachel to be more consistent in carrying out the principle of private judgment advocated by Mr. Fitzhugh and her mother, than they were; his arguments, therefore, carried great weight with them in Rachel's mind, who began to think that she was likely now to discover the truth, and gladly read such works as Mr. Campbell placed in her hands. It was with some degree of apprehension that Miss Croft discovered this.

"My dear Rachel," she began, one day, "I do not like to see you studying these books of Mr. Campbell's; you know what Mr. Fitzhugh thinks of him, and our Wesleyan Minister says the same, that he is a very dangerous person, for the Socinians do not believe the gospel."

"Nay, my dear Ann," replied Rachel, "he says he does believe it, and I should think he is the best judge whether he believes it or not; surely you would not be uncharitable enough to decide upon another person's belief contrary to his own assertion; he declares he does believe it, and you and I can only do the same. I do not see why he should not be right as well as ourselves; at all events, I think he ought to be heard, and I am resolved to read all that is to be said on his side of the question."

In this dilemma, Mr. Fitzhugh was called in; but he did not mend matters. In his discussions with Charles, Rachel had frequently heard him declare that the rights of private judgment were the very principle of Protestantism; that the Church of England admitted this principle to the full; and that if this were once denied,

the Established Church would fall to the ground ; nay, in some of the conversations held upon the subject, she had heard this gentleman say, that there was at present a large body of men, in the bosom of the English Church, who denied this principle, and that, in consequence, they were traitors to their Church, had no right to remain in it, and that their only honest course was to go at once over to Rome. These assertions it was impossible for Mr. Fitzhugh to contradict, now that they were brought to bear against him from a quarter he did not expect. He had used them for the very best of purposes, viz. to retain his young friend in the bosom of the Church of England. He had shewn to him the great evils which had resulted to the Church from the careless and irreverent way in which, for many years, traditions had been admitted into the general belief. He had identified these false traditions with the true traditions admitted by the Church of England ; and thus, in one fell swoop, he had destroyed all the authority of antiquity, leaving every one to pick out his own creed, according to that interpretation of holy Scripture he might think fit to put upon it. How, then, she asked, can Mr. Campbell be wrong, if Mr. Fitzhugh be right ?

Charles heard of the state of his sister's mind, and lamented it ; but at present he could offer no assistance in her difficulties. He was still unsettled himself. Under these circumstances, Mr. Campbell was well nigh carrying off the ardent and sincere girl, upon whom he was bringing to bear his most subtle and dangerous arguments. There was a degree of openness and freedom about what he said, courting discussion, which appeared to her much more in accordance with the rights of private judgment than the course of argument she had generally heard adopted by her own party. She knew that Mr. Fitzhugh pro-

fessed to give a license to every man to use his own judgment to the full in interpreting the Scriptures; but it was nothing more than a profession, for when it bore against his own position, then he withdrew his principle. It was allowed, for instance, that a man should use his private judgment as long as he remained in the Church of England, and put a Calvinistic interpretation upon controverted points. But if his private judgment led him to a different interpretation, or to Rome, or one or other of the Protestant sects, then he was to be stopped at once, and told that he had no right to carry out his principles so far. "All this," said Mr. Campbell, "is prejudice and error: Mr. Fitzhugh's principle is perfectly right; the full right of private judgment, and the supremacy of reason, are the very principles of Protestantism; but he has been brought up in a bigoted school, and, of course, has very great difficulty in overcoming prejudices. The consequence is, that he is unphilosophical, and afraid to carry out his principle to its legitimate result. We have thrown off our prejudices; we stand forward to the world as an honest body of persons, who are determined to act consistently, let the cost be what it may."

Rachel thought all this just and true, and was now so far impressed with Mr. Campbell's reasoning, as to give occasional hints to Miss Croft of her intention to join the Socinians. When this intelligence was conveyed to Mrs. Ford, Mr. Fitzhugh was again called in. Poor man, what could he do? Rachel brought forward against him the very arguments he himself had used against her brother; nay, with a boldness which evinced at once the freedom of her judgment, she carried them out far more logically than he had done, and shewed, that, upon his own position, she was a better Protestant than he was.

Mrs. Ford was aghast ; her son in Scylla, her daughter in Charybdis. She felt that it was useless attempting to steer her own vessel through such dangers, and began to think that there was no truth in religion at all, that it was a cunningly devised fable, commenced and continued by priests and statesmen, to bring riches and honours to the one, and to be used as a political engine by the other.

At this period a circumstance occurred which tended in no slight degree to make matters worse among the inmates of Weston.

There was in the town of Preston a district-branch of the Syncretic Society, for disseminating religious works ; Mr. Fitzhugh was joint secretary with the Rev. Jonathan Stevens, preacher at the new Independent meeting-house, in Ebenezer-lane ; and Mr. Ford was president,—an office, by the way, which this gentleman had undertaken only after very considerable persuasion from his wife and Miss Croft, who were anxious that such an important and elevated office should not fall into lower and less worthy hands.

In the month of June, which had now arrived, this district-branch held its annual meeting, when speakers of all denominations, from every quarter, came to Preston. Considerable preparations had been made on the present occasion to render the meeting as acceptable as possible.

The great Mr. Sparks from Nottingham, the no-less-great Mr. Field from Birmingham, and divers others, some great, some small, were to address the meeting.

The walls of the town were placarded at every corner with bills that reached nearly from the top to the bottom, announcing that, on June 10th, the annual meeting would be held in the large school-room (for all denominations), when, at 12 o'clock precisely, the

Rev. George Fisher, rector of Stoke, would take the chair. A deputation from the parent society would attend; and Oronoko Shimshamkee, with his brothers Chiramboree and Chittikum, from Otaheite, would, in their national costume, tell the assembly the number of religious works, published by this society, given away in their island. Other gentlemen, and clergymen of all denominations, would, in the course of the morning, address the meeting.

Such was the statement announced on the walls of the town; and as this lengthy document—mighty in size, and splendid in the varied hues of red, blue, and yellow, in which its letters were fancifully arranged, powerful also in its own intrinsic merit, carrying, as it did, upon its surface, the names of men celebrated in their generation—could not but arrest the gaze of all that visited Preston, it was expected that this anniversary would far excel every other anniversary that had ever been held.

Weston Hall was to be filled with the greatest of the men that were coming, among whom we must mention the chairman, Mr. Fisher, and his *brethren* from Nottingham and Birmingham, as, on the platform, he was accustomed to call them; Oronoko Shimshamkee, with *his* brethren; and a sprinkling of other gentlemen, of all denominations, with their brethren.

Mrs. Ford was in ecstasies. The meeting itself, she thought, would be enchanting; a meeting, however, was a thing of no very uncommon occurrence; but the society of these charming and talented men, *that*, she said, was an event which did not occur in every person's life. Her first expectations had, indeed, been disappointed, as the Marquis of Brandon, who was chairman to most of the sectarian religious societies in the kingdom, had been invited, but declined in consequence

of a previous engagement. Mrs. Ford said she had received a visit from an earl, but never from a marquis, and she should have liked it very much: the Marquis, however, could not come; so she was obliged to put up with her disappointment, and make the best of the chairman that could come, and of the three Otaheitan princes.

The eventful day at last arrived. Mr. Fitzhugh called early in the morning at the Hall, to accompany his friends to the scene of action, and to see that Mr. Ford had his speech all right; for he was to move the first resolution; and had received an anecdote from the parent secretary, which was considered, by those who professed to understand such things, to be worth at the very least five pounds, if properly applied.

The order of the day's operations was shortly run over; and the party, in due time, found themselves comfortably arranged on the platform, in the large school above mentioned. Mr. Ford on the right hand of the chairman; the Otaheitans on the left. Mrs. Ford, with her female staff, including, among others, Rachel and her cousin, under the superintendence of Mrs. Marles, behind; and the Revs. Messieurs Fitzhugh and Stevens, the joint ministers of St. Paul's district-church and the Independent meeting-house, and co-secretaries of the district-branch of the Syncretic Society, in front.

CHAPTER XVI.

The United Brotherhood.

Why, how now, sons and brother, at a strife!
What is your quarrel?

SHAKSPERE.

As soon as the noise and disturbance attendant on the seating and arranging the vast multitude had subsided, on the motion of Mr. Ford, seconded by Mr. Fitzhugh, the Rev. George Fisher, rector of Stokey, was called to the chair. Silence being proclaimed, Mr. Fisher rose, and proposed that, before the business of the meeting commenced, Mr. Fitzhugh should offer up prayer.

This proposition, simple as it appears to be, was so unfavourably received, that it bid fair to bring this very promising meeting to an abrupt termination. A gentleman arose,—no one seemed to know who,—but he commenced by saying, his impression was, when he joined the Syncretic Society, that all topics of religious difference were to be avoided, and that he considered the motion of the chairman a virtual infringement of the regulation. Hereupon voices were heard immediately of, "Let's have Stevens;" when others arose of, "No Stevens;" which was followed by a great hubbub of divers sounds, amid which could now and then be distinguished, "No Fitzhugh," "No Fisher," "Stevens," "Sparks," "Field," "Heley," "Campbell," &c. &c.* At this unexpected disturbance, the

* A somewhat similar circumstance occurred at a public meeting in Manchester in 1841.

chairman rose and said, that he was really very much surprised at the way in which his proposal had been received. He imagined that he was addressing a body of Christians, who, at all events, were agreed on the fundamentals of religion, and who had met here in one common cause, in a spirit of unity and peace. He was afraid there must have been some little mistake with regard to his proposition; he begged again, therefore, to move that Mr. Fitzhugh commence prayer. The meeting, however, appeared to be perfectly well acquainted with the nature of Mr. Fisher's proposal, as immediately, in far louder and more unequivocal tones, were heard the same sounds of—"No Fitzhugh," "No Fisher;" "Field," "Sparks," "Stevens, for ever!"

In the midst of this confused tumult, Mr. Lamb, a Wesleyan, generally one of the chief speakers on these occasions, arose, and after considerable difficulty obtained a hearing. He commenced by stating that he was but an ill judge of the proper course to be adopted at public meetings—although, indeed, he had been honoured with the proposing and seconding of many resolutions in such cases; but if he mistook not—"however," he observed, "I speak under correction—if I mistake not, the rev. the chairman has exceeded the limits of his honourable office, by proposing a resolution."

Mr. Fisher rose to explain; and in effect said, that he did not intend his proposal to be considered in the light of a resolution. The business of the meeting had not commenced.

Mr. Lamb continued: "It is really impossible, gentlemen, to comprehend what the rev. chairman means, when he says that his proposal was not to be considered as a resolution. As far as I understand these things,

in parliamentary language a resolution is a proposal, and a proposal is a resolution. Is it not so? (*Yes, yes! Hear, hear! Well done, Lamb! Right, Lamb! &c. &c.*) This, then, gentlemen, being the case," continued Mr. Lamb, "I beg to propose that we have a fresh chairman—one that understands his business. I beg to propose that Mr. Josiah Heley be called upon to preside over this large and influential meeting."

Mr. Heley was the Wesleyan preacher at Preston, and a very intimate friend of Lamb's. At this point Mr. Ford arose and said, that Mr. Lamb's proposition was a thing unheard of. Mr. Fisher had come from a great distance to preside on the present occasion; he had been properly proposed, and seconded, and called unanimously to the chair, and that it was quite unprecedented now to remove him.

Mr. Lamb persisted in his resolution, and requested the chairman to put the question. This Mr. Fisher declined to do; but said, that as there appeared to be some objection to his holding the office of chairman, which had been entirely unsought-for by him, he should at once relinquish the post he held. With these words he left the chair.

What passed in poor Mrs. Ford's mind at this pitiful conduct of Mr. Fisher's, as she afterwards called it, is impossible to say; certain it is, she met the triumphant gaze with which Mr. Lamb favoured her, with a withering look, which appeared to animate that gentleman through his subsequent very powerful address to the meeting, which ended by his again proposing Mr. Heley as chairman.

An amendment to this was moved by Mr. Fitzhugh, who felt serious alarm at the turn affairs were taking, that Mr. Ford be called to the chair; and a second amendment by some person in the crowd, that Mr.

Campbell be chairman. As was natural, all this produced much confusion, which at length ended in Mr. Heley being chosen by a large majority.

Mr. Heley in the chair, Lamb again arose and said, that now matters were likely to be carried on orderly, and begged therefore to propose that Mr. Stevens say prayers. To this, amendments were moved, and a great disturbance, as before, excited; which ended by the chairman declaring, that as several gentlemen present appeared each to wish to have their own minister to pray on this occasion, which, indeed, he said, was very natural, he thought it better they should not pray at all. Prayers therefore were dispensed with. As soon as this was settled, the chairman stated that the order of the meeting was, that the annual report be read by one of the secretaries,—which of the secretaries he did not mention. Perhaps he thought it a delicate point; and such indeed it proved to be. A fresh disturbance arose whether it should be Mr. Fitzhugh or Stevens; which ended in the latter gentleman being requested by the meeting to perform this office. The report read, Mr. Heley called upon Mr. Ford to move the first resolution.

Mr. Ford rose and said, that before he moved the resolution he held in his hand, he felt quite sure that the meeting would allow him to make some few remarks upon the circumstances which had just taken place. He alluded to the unjustifiable and unhand-some way in which his friend Mr. Fisher, the rector of Stokey, had been thrust from the chair. On the mention of Mr. Fisher's name a commotion arose, and cries were uttered as before in different parts of the room: (*Question, question! No Fisher! Heley and Stevens! Field and Sparks! &c. &c.*) Mr. Ford found it useless to attempt any further remarks upon this point, and therefore submitted with the best grace

he could to the stern mandates of the assembly, and suffered his friend's wrongs to sink into oblivion.

During the confusion, Mr. Fisher, who on leaving the chair had retired to the seat next Mrs. Ford, got up twice to address the meeting, being apparently much moved at the unequivocal marks of disapprobation which were excited at the mention of his name. Mrs. Ford, however, who began to think such a course not altogether the most prudent in the world, advised him to sit down, and to trust his cause in the hands of her husband. The exhortations of Mrs. Ford, backed as they were by those of Mrs. Marles, who was sitting on the other side of him, evidently enjoying the scene, had the desired effect, and the ex-chairman took his seat; not, however, before he had caught Mr. Lamb's eye, which was now turned full on the place where he was sitting, and who at the present moment was rejoicing in the full transport of victory.

In due time quiet was restored, and Mr. Ford commenced his speech, which ran nearly as follows:—"Gentlemen, we are met together here for one common cause—the circulation of the works published by the Syncretic Society. We come not together in a party spirit, or in bigotry—(*Hear, hear!* from Mr. Lamb); we come here to act unanimously on common ground. We may differ on other points, (*Hear, hear, hear!*) but on this point we are united,—we wish to circulate books. Books, gentlemen, are wanted abroad, they are wanted at home; the heathen world is very demoralised, so is our population here. Books, gentlemen, would remedy this. (*Hear, hear!* from Mr. M'Adams, who was generally present at these meetings, and took a lively interest in the proceedings.) We are no papists," continued Mr. Ford, who just then caught the sarcastic tone of Mr. M'Adams' *Hear, hear!*

and was determined not to be put down by that gentleman. "I repeat it," continued Mr. Ford, emphatically, "we are no papists; we do not wish to burn books and let no man read them (*cheers*); no, we would give them to all, east and west, north and south, through the length and breadth of the land, from Johnny Groat's house to the Land's End; we would have every man, woman, and child have books (*Immense cheers*). I have spoken of the papists." Here the speaker looked hard at M'Adams. "I will tell you an anecdote (*hear, hear!* from Mr. Fitzhugh and Mrs. Marles): I heard of a gentleman who was lately travelling in Ireland, and who hired a poor man of that country as servant during his tour. On parting from him, the gentleman, after paying him his wages, offered him a Bible published by the Syncretic Society (*loud cheers*). Well, you will scarcely credit me (*Hear, hear!* from M'Adams), but it is a fact (*Hear!* again from the same quarter), the poor man refused it; and said that he did not dare to take it (*groans*). 'Not dare to take it!' said the gentleman; 'why not?' Listen, my friends, to the answer; it is enough to make one's blood run cold: he said that the priest would not allow him to read it (*tremendous groans*). This, gentlemen, is the state of Ireland; and much do I wish that these dreadful things were confined to Ireland: but we have now a body of men in our own land who are advocating reserve in religious knowledge, and who, I fear, will bring about the same shocking things among us. Let us, however, go on spreading the books of this society as much as possible, as a remedy against such a state of things. I hear with regret," continued Mr. Ford, "that some gentlemen have discovered in this society a translation of the Bible different from the one used by our Church; I hear that the translation used by the Roman Catholics is, in some

instances, published by this society : this, I must say, I regret ; and I trust that the gentleman who attends as a deputation from the parent society will explain this. I do regret this very deeply ; as, although I think that every man has a right to put his own interpretation upon our translation of the Bible, I do not think that every man has a right to his own translation ; I think that our translation is best, and that every body ought to use it. I beg to thank you for the kind way in which you have listened to me ; and to move that the report just now read be adopted and published ; and in addition I should wish to propose, that it is the opinion of this meeting, that the Syncretic Society ought to circulate none but the authorised version. I could have wished," observed Mr. Ford in conclusion, "that my friend Mr. Fitzhugh had read the report." Here cries of, *No, no! Stevens, Stevens! Question, question!* interrupted him ; and he was obliged to sit down, amid mingled cheers and groans from the contending parties of the two secretaries.

Mr. Lamb now got up, and in a long and lively speech seconded the resolution that had been moved by Mr. Ford. This done, the chairman put the question ; when Mr. Campbell, the Socinian we have before spoken of, rose and said, "That as there appeared one very objectionable point in his friend Mr. Ford's speech, he trusted that gentleman, and the meeting at large, would excuse him, if he begged to move an amendment. "My objection," he said, "relates to the way in which Mr. Ford has spoken of different translations of the Bible. My honourable friend said 'that every man has a right to his own interpretation of the authorised version of the Bible ;' in this we are perfectly agreed : but he does not think that every man has a right to his own translation ; in this we differ,—for, gentlemen, what

is a translation? it is but rendering original ideas into another language; and surely if a man has a right to interpret a book when it is translated, according to his own sense of its meaning, he may use his own discretion in translating it. The rules for one are as strict as the rules for the other. It is impossible that all men should be agreed, whether in the precise meaning of a word as originally used, or the precise word to be used in the translation, or in the proper interpretation of the word when it is translated. There must be differences in these matters; and in such things there is only one true and safe ground of union, and that is, an agreement to differ—the common ground on which we stand on the present occasion. (*Hear, hear!*) I object to the Popish translation of the Scriptures as much as Mr. Ford does; I am not speaking in their behalf; I am only advocating a principle; and that principle is, that every man, supposing him competent by education, supposing him to be learned, careful, and honest,—every man, I say, in this case, has a right to his own translation of the Bible. (*Hear, hear! and cheers.*) I do not altogether object to the authorised version, proposed by Mr. Ford to be exclusively adopted by this society; there are some points in it which I do not like, and such parts of course I do not read when using it. I do not see, however, why we should not have our version as well as others; and I really think that we have just as much right to our version as Mr. Ford and his party have to theirs. As an amendment, I beg to propose that the latter part of Mr. Ford's resolution be left out."

Mr. Wing, an Anabaptist, seconded Mr. Campbell's amendment, which, after a long discussion, was negatived and rejected.

Several other speeches followed, some by clergymen,

and lay members of the Church, some by dissenting preachers; all of them advocating the circulation of the works published by the Syncretic Society.

Most of the speakers alluded to Mr. Campbell's amendment; some thought it very fair, and said that the reasoning of that gentleman was most clear and conclusive. Of course men would differ as much in translating a book as they would in interpreting it when translated; it was therefore quite right that every man should have his own translation; and as the fundamental principle of the Syncretic Society was, a union of all parties of different religious persuasions for one object, it certainly appeared to them, the society's object could only properly be fulfilled by publishing such translations of the Bible as the respective members of the different sects might require, and in such a case Mr. Campbell was entitled to his translation, as other men to theirs. Some on the other side denied this position; they said that Mr. Campbell's Bible was no Bible at all, the translation incorrect. In answer to which, that gentleman rose up and denied that such was the case; concluding by asking the gentleman who made the assertion, whether he had read the Bible in the original language. To this the previous speaker answered in the negative; when Mr. Campbell triumphantly added, that he had, and he could positively assure the meeting that his translation, or the one used by his sect, was perfectly and entirely correct. At one period of the meeting a Socialist attempted to speak,—one Mr. Martin, the missionary, as he called himself, of that society, from Glasgow: after considerable difficulty he obtained a hearing, but only just long enough to propose his resolution, which was, That as every man had a right to his own interpretation, and many gentlemen appeared to think that every man had a right to his own

Bible, he could not exactly see of what use that book was, and begged therefore to propose, That there should be no Bible published by this society at all.

Upon this there was a great uproar, the chairman in vain attempting to keep order; at length the police, who were in attendance, were called in, and ejected Mr. Martin and his friends from the meeting.

After this occurrence, the Otaheitan princes were called for, each of whom spoke for about five minutes, but nothing to the purpose; two of them indeed spoke such bad English that no one could understand them.

Mr. Fitzhugh made a long and brilliant speech, as his friends termed it, which indeed would have been *the* speech of the day, had he not been eclipsed by Mr. Stevens, who spoke for an hour and three quarters: this was the concluding part of the day's proceedings, except some few remarks from Mr. Lamb, who proposed the thanks to the chairman. After which, the assembly separated, speakers and hearers much fatigued with the long and tedious work in which they had been engaged.

As soon as the meeting was over, Mrs. Ford invited some of the principal personages to Weston, to partake of a cold collation, which had been prepared for the occasion. This for the most part was gladly accepted, as it was generally understood that during the evening there would be some discussion and edifying conversation concerning some of the most important topics that had been touched upon at the meeting. Among those who did not attend was Charles Ford, who begged his mother to excuse him, as he had another engagement, and immediately left them, to join Mr. M'Adams, who was waiting for him at a little distance, and carried him off to his house, where, in company with the two Roman Catholic priests at Preston, he spent the evening,

much surprised at the way in which matters were conducted at the meetings of the far-famed Syncretic Society.

CHAPTER XVII.

Controversial.

That may not bee, said then the ferryman,
Least we unweeting hap to be fordonne :
For those same islands, seeming now and than,
Are not firme land ; . . . therefore doe them shoune ;
For they have oft drawne many a wandring wight
Into most deadly danger and distressed plight.

SPENSER.

SOME few mornings after the meeting detailed in the last chapter, Henry Howard received the following note from his friend :—

“ Weston Hall, June 15.

“ DEAR HENRY,—We have lately been great strangers to each other ; the cause of this, perhaps, both of us may partly guess at,—in a great measure the fault is mine. I am now really anxious to see you, and hope that you will not disappoint me, as my mind at present is in a very unsettled and disturbed state. You are my oldest friend—once my dearest. You have, I know, read and reflected deeply on the subjects that trouble me ; and there is no one with whom I can, under existing circumstances, feel such confidence in talking over these points as yourself. Pray do not refuse. Our party are from home ; so if you come, we will have a quiet dinner together at six o'clock.—
Yours very sincerely, CHARLES FORD.”

This invitation was accepted ; and at six o'clock Henry Howard walked up to Weston, where he found

his former friend in a very depressed state of mind. As soon as dinner was over and the cloth removed, Charles began the conversation by regretting that the intimacy between them had been so much interrupted. In these regrets Henry concurred; but said, that as Charles for some time had been running such an uncertain course, and was engaged in such different pursuits from those in which he was involved, his partial estrangement was scarcely to be wondered at. "Well," said Charles, "we will not say more upon this point; but now let me tell you the cause of my present anxiety, and you must forgive me if I enter on a long and tedious subject. I have thought much lately upon the all-important subject of religion. You know in some degree the course I have run. At Cambridge I was, in the early part of my residence, very wild, and lived in a very wicked way. In this career I was mercifully arrested by the hand of God by an accident, which, but for His goodness, might have deprived me of life. During my illness the thoughts of death frequently came over me; I felt horror-struck at the dreadful prospect of appearing before the judgment-seat of Christ in an unprepared state, and resolved, if I ever recovered, to be a reformed character. It pleased God to restore me to health; and on returning to Weston, I commenced what I then thought to be a strictly religious life, and, to the best of my power, endeavoured to remedy the evil I had done. In pursuance of this, I thought it necessary that I should not only mend my own course of life, but that I was bound to do all in my power to persuade those within my reach to embrace the religious opinions and to practise the pious ways to which I was resolved. In consequence of this conviction, I became, as you know, a district-visitor and Sunday-school teacher. For some time I continued regular in the

duties I had taken upon myself, and have a satisfaction in thinking that I did persuade some few to give up the wicked lives they were leading. You advised me at the time, I remember, not to undertake these offices so soon after my change of life; in this advice I have reason now to think that you were right, as I cannot but feel that the undue position in which I was then placed was unwholesome to my moral state, and nourished a degree of pride which has been, and still is, very injurious to me.

“ Well, as I said, this went on for some time; during which I read a great many religious works, placed in my hands by Mr. Fitzhugh, my mother, and others: from these I was taught to consider the subject of the Church as a matter of little moment—in fact, I learnt to think that there was no visible Church, to entertain low views of the sacraments, and to place the whole of my religion in an assumption of an abstract faith in the Saviour—a doctrine, by the by, I could never understand, at least in the way in which it was propounded to me,—and in the possession of warm and excited feelings, as the sure and certain test of possessing a saving faith. For some months this did very well for me; I knew no better, and thought that I ought to receive as true what I was told, and to entertain no doubts upon it. This I endeavoured to do. At length, however, I discovered so many inconsistencies and absurdities, that my faith in the system I had adopted was shaken, and I had occasionally very uncomfortable feelings upon the subject.

“ At this period I met Mr. M‘Adams; and in some conversations with him became satisfied that the ground on which I stood was untenable, that the doctrines I had been accustomed to consider as true were false, that they were quite contrary to the general tenor of holy

Scripture, as well as the particular meaning of the passages themselves in which these doctrines are treated of.

“And now—you must forgive me, Henry, for the assertion, I speak honestly—I must confess, that for some time I have entertained very great fears that the Church of England is no true Church. At the present moment I am pursuing this investigation; and if convinced, as I almost fear I shall be, that such is the case, I intend to leave the Church of England.

“Stay a few moments,” said Charles, who saw that Henry was just about to speak,—“stay a few moments, till I have quite concluded my tedious tale. I have lately accidentally dropped upon a work which I have frequently heard you speak of favourably—*The Tracts for the Times*. Of this book I have read but little; but what little I have read has certainly surprised me very much, and has led me to think that I am not quite aware of the true principles of our Church, and that she really stands upon a different foundation and holds different doctrines from those imputed to her either by Mr. Fitzhugh or Mr. M’Adams.

“Now, to change one’s religion, as it is termed, is a matter of such immense importance, and, in my own case especially, would be attended with such grievous consequences, that I am resolved to sift the question to the very bottom. For that purpose, Henry, both as a Christian and a friend, I have called upon you for your assistance; and I trust you will also give me your prayers, that, through God’s mercy, I may be led into truth.”

In answer to the above remarks, Henry replied that he certainly would do his best to set his friend right; “But I am,” said he, “a very unfit person to undertake so important and responsible an office. Pray let me advise you to apply to Mr. Milles, who, I am sure,

will spare no pains in the matter, and is fully competent to such a task."

"No," replied Charles; "I should prefer talking over these things first with you. Thus much, however, I will say, that if you satisfy me on some of the points I shall bring before you, I will then apply to Mr. Milles for assistance in respect of the remainder."

With this Henry was obliged to be satisfied, and requested his friend to begin.

"The first question I shall ask," said Charles, "relates to the *existence* of the English Church. What ground have you for supposing that the English Church, as it is called, is a true Church? There is but one true Church. If, then, the Church of England does not belong to that which all along has been considered the Catholic Church, and which, as I understand, you yourselves admit to be so, how can it belong to the Church?"

"There is indeed," replied Henry, "but one Catholic Apostolic Church, as we confess in the creeds. But as every body has many members, so we say of the body of Christ, the Church, it has many members, as other bodies have. Such was the case in the days of the apostles, and such is the case now. In the days of the apostles the Catholic Church itself contained within it several separate members, to each of which, as in some senses independent members of the body, was given the name of a Church: *e.g.* St. John begins his book of the Revelations (chap. i. ver. 4), 'John to the seven Churches which are in Asia;' and other instances might be mentioned. They all, indeed, were united together by the same doctrine and the same apostolate; not, indeed, that they were all founded by one individual apostle, but were founded by different apostles upon the same principle, viz. built on the foundation of

apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone. But among these different Churches, or different branches of the Church, there was no supremacy. We read neither in the Bible nor in the ancient writings of the Church that any one Church asserted such a superiority over the others as the Church of Rome, *e. g.*, has claimed in latter times. We read, indeed, of a precedency in rank, not indeed as exclusively belonging to Rome, for Constantinople and Antioch had given to them in the East what was afterwards granted to Rome in the West; but this precedency, whether at Rome, or Antioch, or Constantinople, by no means implied a supremacy to such an extent as that every Church that did not bow down and submit to her decisions was to be excommunicated. It certainly does appear to me very strange, that the Church of Rome should persist in this claim of supremacy, and for the sake of it put a stop to all prospect of unity."

"But," remarked Charles, "suppose that she were to wave this question of supremacy, would you allow her a precedency?"

"That," replied Henry, "is a different question; but I am inclined to think that, if all other objections were removed, the Church of England would not refuse to acknowledge such a claim to *her*, from whom, in earlier days, she received such immense advantages. At all events, the Church of Rome should relinquish the former point, if untenable, as we believe it to be, this latter claim she might then make, if she thought fit to do so, with a better grace."

"And what would be the advantage of this," asked Charles, "either to her or to you?"

"It would at least tend to unity," answered Henry.

"And do you think that unity with Rome is desirable?" said Charles.

"How can you ask such a silly question?" observed his friend. "How can you doubt for a moment of unity being desirable? Don't we pray for it? Is it not the prayer of our blessed Lord Himself? My dear Charles, there surely ought not to be a question upon this point. Unity is most desirable,—desirable for us, and desirable for Rome, desirable for all. Who can tell what evils we are suffering now, and what blessings we have forfeited, from our disunion? Where are the saints of old? Have we now living men holy as those who were on earth when the Church was less disunited than it now is? And may not this want of individual piety arise from a want of Christian unity? Where are the miracles wrought of old? Where are the martyrs? Are they to be found here? are they to be found there? Alas, the answer is humiliating! It is impossible to say how far our disunion is the cause of all this falling off; but since Christ's promises are made to His Church as the Church, we have certainly lost all claim to them when, as is the case, we are torn and rent into different parts."

"Whose, then, is the fault?" asked Charles.

"'Tis the fault of both, I fear," answered Henry. "Sin and wickedness produced the division, and sin and wickedness still foster it. The time may come when both parties will see this; when they will lay aside their bitter recriminations, and cruel feelings towards each other; when they will each purge themselves of the respective errors that keep them now apart; and when they will be as they once were, brethren in the same faith—one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ the Lord. May God, in His own time, grant to the Christian world such a consummation!"

To this aspiration Charles fervently echoed Amen.

"With regard, then, to the supremacy of Rome," continued Charles, "you say that history is against it?"

"Yes," replied Henry, "we assert that the traditions of the Church prove such a demand untenable. As I said, whatever may be thought of its being desirable that the Bishop of Rome should have a precedency in general councils, &c.—which is quite another question,—with regard to Rome's supremacy, we think that it is contrary to tradition."

"Then you do go to traditions," said Charles, smiling.

"Certainly," replied Harry. "For matters of fact tradition is invaluable, and scarcely less valuable in interpreting doctrines; for surely if any men were likely to know the real doctrines of the Gospel preached by our blessed Lord and His apostles, those men were who conversed with them."

"But I understood," said Charles, "that the Church of England refused all tradition."

"Then, Charles," said Henry, "you were misled. She refuses the traditions of Rome—not all of them, indeed; but such of them as are as incapable of proof as their traditions for the supremacy of the Pope. She likewise refuses the *principle* upon which the Church of Rome holds traditions. She does not admit that unwritten traditions, even if said to be the traditions of the holy apostles, have equal claim as authority as the written word. Of course she gives to them all the weight they are worth, and this is very great; but she does not allow them to be equal in value to the Scriptures, which, from the concurrent tradition of the Church, she knows to be the word of God."

"Well," observed Charles, "this appears clear enough; very different, however, from what I believed to be the doctrine of the Church of England. I understand you to say, that there is one Catholic Apostolic Church, of which the Church in England is a part; but

you deny that to constitute this fellowship it is necessary to belong to the Roman Catholic Church ; *i. e.* you say it is unnecessary to admit the supremacy of the Pope ; and in order to prove this, you appeal to tradition."

"Just so," replied Henry.

"And now, Henry," said Charles, "of the succession. You have lost the apostolical succession, Mr. M'Adams tells me ; and therefore I wish to know how the Church of England can belong to the Church ; the succession, I imagine, being necessary to the very existence of a Church."

"You cannot mean to say," replied Henry, "that Mr. M'Adams has renewed the old story of the Nag's Head, and led you to suppose that at the time of which that story treats we lost the succession?"

"Yes," answered Charles, "he has frequently told me the story, and appears to believe it true."

"It is altogether false," said Henry ; "and in proof of this, I shall not adduce the incontestable evidences we ourselves possess upon the matter ; but refer you to the Roman Catholic historian Dr. Lingard, who admits that the story is not true. The succession in the English Church is as unbroken as the succession in the Roman Church ; on this head you need entertain no doubts."

"I fear," said Charles, "that I am very troublesome ; but if you could know what great satisfaction your answers to my questions have already afforded me, I am sure you would not think it labour lost."

Henry replied, that he was most happy in being of any service to his friend ; and was only afraid that he was a very incompetent adviser in a case of such difficulty.

"Well then," said Charles, "you must answer me again. I wish to know the meaning of the king being the head of the Church ; Mr. M'Adams laughs im-

mensely at this, and says that it is one of the most ridiculous things he ever heard of; but quite worthy of a Protestant establishment."

"The meaning of it," said Henry, "appears to be this: the king is head of the Church in England, not as if it was essentially necessary to the Church in this country that he should be so; he is not necessarily, but accidentally, the head. The Church happens to be—I say *happens to be*, not of course thereby excluding the superintendence of God, but the more readily to explain my meaning,—the Church happens to be established in this country; it might be established, or it might not, neither one nor the other is at all essential to the existence of a Church; indeed some very learned and good men in our Church appear to think that it would be better for her if she was not established. The Church, therefore, being established, it becomes requisite, or at least highly desirable, that there should be a head of the establishment; and who, in such a case, so fit as the sovereign of the land? In spiritual matters, the king has no power; he cannot ordain; he cannot administer the Sacraments, nor minister publicly in the congregation; in fact he does not touch, in the slightest degree, any part of the priestly office. It would take too long a time, and require greater ability and learning than I possess, to explain all the circumstances connected with the union of Church and State, involved in this subject of the king being supreme head. However, as I said, her union with the State, and consequently the king's headship, are accidental, and in no degree affect the real question, as to the existence of the Church in England."

Charles said that he was much obliged by what Henry said; and that, as it was getting late, he would postpone any further discussion on the subject to a future

occasion. "If you can," he added, "come to-morrow night, by which time I shall have been able to reflect upon the points we have now talked of, and have some more questions ready for you."

To this Henry readily assented, and took leave of his friend with a silent but earnest prayer, that the conversation which had taken place might be blessed by Almighty God to the leading of his friend and himself into all truth.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Conversation continued.

Said then the boatman, Palmer, sterve aright,
And keepe an even course.

SPENSER.

ON the following day, punctual to his appointment, Henry walked up to Weston, where, in addition to his friend, he found Miss Croft and Rachel, who at the time of his entering the room were discussing some of the points upon which the conversation had turned on the preceding evening.

As soon as Henry was seated, Miss Croft commenced by saying, "Well, Mr. Howard, I find out from the remarks I have just heard from Charles, that you are almost as much a Catholic as he is."

"A Catholic!" said Henry; "I trust I am not only almost as much, but altogether as much as he is; that is," added he, checking himself, "as far as the profession goes; for, alas, few of us practise as Catholics should practise."

"You know what I mean," replied Ann; "you are almost as much a Roman Catholic as he is."

“ Indeed,” said Henry, “ I was not aware of it; that is,” he said, again correcting himself, “ if Charles is any thing of a Roman Catholic.”

“ Yes,” replied Ann, “ he is indeed a great deal of a Roman Catholic, as I suspect you are ; for he tells me that you admit a great many things, which, I am sure, none but Roman Catholics would admit, such as no Protestant can for a moment receive. For instance, he says that you allow traditions, and think that the Fathers are equal authority with the Bible.”

“ I fancy,” replied Henry, “ you must have mistaken Charles, as he cannot suppose that I place any thing on terms of equality with the written Word of God.”

“ Oh,” said Charles with a smile, interrupting him, “ I have told her almost fifty times, I think, what you said of the traditions of the Church, and how you considered them valuable, as witnessing matters of fact, and teaching us the proper interpretation of the Bible; and, indeed, I must say, that after much reflection and the inquiry I have made of the books you recommended yesterday, I am disposed to agree with the view of the Church of England in respect of traditions, in preference to that of the Church of Rome. I have repeatedly endeavoured to explain the difference to Ann, and to shew her that while the Church of England values the traditions of the Church, as explanatory of the hidden and difficult parts of Holy Scripture, subsidiary in fact to the Bible, the Church of Rome places them on terms of equality, nay, even practically makes them superior. I have told her this very often, as I said ; but she will not, or cannot see the difference, and persists in saying that both views are the same ; and concludes her remarks by stating, that you are a Papist in disguise, and quite as bad as Mr. M‘Adams.”

"I am very sorry," remarked Henry, "that Miss Croft should see the matter in that light; but perhaps the time will come when she will do the Church of England justice."

"And now," said Rachel, who, although silent, was evidently much interested in the conversation, "I suppose we ladies must depart. Theology is," she continued, smiling, "beyond our province; and you men always think that poor women have nothing to do with these matters, but that we ought to spend our lives in worsted-work, mending stockings, and such like."

"No," observed Henry, "you must not bring quite so strong a charge against us as that. Perhaps it is better, every thing considered, that ladies should enter as little as possible into theological controversy; indeed, I think the less of it any one does the better; but far from consigning your sex to an ignoble life of darning and patchwork, I have heard it very frequently regretted by men, whose opinions are worthy of respect, that women are as ill educated as they are, and especially in matters connected with religion. For my own part, I do not see why ladies should not be well read in the history of the Church, especially in that portion of it to which they belong; and also be fully instructed in the doctrines and principles which they profess to hold. If this were done more than it is at the present time, we should have less fear of young ladies falling a prey to the insidious arguments which are brought against the Church by her adversaries."

Rachel blushed, and felt the remark, whether intended or not, to be applicable to herself. She continued: "Well, then, Henry," (they had never ceased to call each other by their Christian name,) "will you allow us of the weaker sex to be present during your conversation with Charles; for he has told us the ob-

ject you have in view this evening? I can assure you that I, for one, am very much interested in this matter, more so perhaps than you imagine; and that I shall consider it a very great favour if I am allowed to remain."

In support of her request, Charles added, that he had been alone with Rachel during the whole of the morning, when they had gone over, one by one, the very same points which he and Henry had conversed upon on the preceding evening.

Henry again expressed his regret that he should be called upon to answer objections, and treat on subjects beyond his province, an office which he felt himself unable to perform; but on their promising to consult Mr. Milles on any points which he could not explain, he consented that Rachel and her cousin should remain.

"Now, then," said Charles, "before I begin, I must tell you that Mr. M'Adams has been here to-day, and that we had a brief conversation upon some of the subjects we treated of last night."

"Indeed!" said Henry, "and what was the result?"

"He smiled at some of the things I said," replied Charles, "and denied others; but I told him I was not to be laughed out of the truth, whether it be with them or with us; nor would I take a simple denial as an evidence against another person's assertion. Our conversation ended, however, by his stating, that even if we had a right to be considered as belonging to the Church, our doctrines were so false, and our discipline so bad, that no really conscientious man could possibly remain in the Church of England."

"Well," said Miss Croft, "although Mr. M'Adams made that remark, there is certainly some truth in it; I am certain that the lives of some clergymen are so careless, and even worse, that I am not surprised many

really spiritual-minded persons leave the Church ; and as to the doctrines of the Church, I am sure that I do not know what they are, although I have very often attempted to find out."

"Come, come," said Charles, smiling, "we must not be too hard upon Henry, who, I suppose, we must to-night regard as the champion of our Church ; for I fancy we three have all of us our several objections to it. Let us, therefore, hear what he has to say to Mr. M'Adam's first objection. He says that the Church of England has no sacraments."

"How does he mean," asked Henry, "that she has no sacraments? I suppose he alludes to the disputed succession ; and says, that having lost the succession, we cannot have the sacraments."

Miss Croft smiled, and remarked, "I should not think the succession has much to do with *that*."

Charles replied, that such was one part of Mr. M'Adams' objection, but he had driven him from that point ; and then he said, that the Church of England did not hold the true doctrine with regard to the sacraments,—that she denied some, and the two she did admit, she regarded as nothing more than empty signs, the one as an admission into a state of external privileges, the other as a commemoration of our blessed Lord's death.

"Mr. M'Adams at all events," remarked Rachel, "appears to be well acquainted with the doctrines of the Church of England."

"I cannot say so," replied Henry ; "at all events in the point before us. But did he make any further remarks on this matter?" asked Henry.

"Yes," said Charles, "he did ; he said, that with these errors in doctrine, he could not see how the Church of England could properly be said to have the sacra-

ments. Of those which we altogether deny, he said he would not speak, but of the two which we professed to admit, he must say that we frittered them away so entirely, that they could not be of any validity to us. 'Baptism with us,' he remarked, 'was an unmeaning form; and the holy Communion a profanation of the most sublime of all Christian mysteries.' "

"Did he bring any evidence from Scripture or antiquity against the doctrines he imputed to the Church of England?" asked Henry.

"Yes," said Charles, "he brought some quotations from the Fathers; but what was most conclusive to my mind that he had some ground for his objection, were passages from two chapters (the 3d and 6th) in St. John's Gospel, which he read; and explained in what way they applied to the two sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord."

"But," said Henry, "you surely knew that those passages were applied by the Church of England to the two sacraments of which we are speaking?"

"No, indeed," said Charles, "I did not: with regard to the first, the discourse of our blessed Lord with Nicodemus, I have always been taught that the expression there used, of being born again, relates to the regeneration that takes place when a man is converted; and with regard to the expressions used in chap. vi., I have always thought that they had reference to faith alone, and had nothing at all to do with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper."

"Strange," said Henry, "that you should have been taught this, as our Church expressly in one instance, that of the 3d chap. of St. John, applies it to Baptism; and in the other, chap. vi., by implication, sanctions it as applying to the holy Eucharist; a view indeed always taken by our standard divines."

"Is such really the case?" asked Rachel; "does the Church of England really apply those passages to the two sacraments?"

"I have always understood so," answered Henry; "but if you carefully peruse our services for these two sacraments, you will see how very evident this is."

"You will say then, I suppose," said Miss Croft, "that the new birth takes place at Baptism, and that there is a real presence in the Lord's Supper?"

"Undoubtedly," answered Henry, "the Church of England asserts both these doctrines."

"Where?" asked Charles; "for this is the point that M'Adams denies, and upon which, I can assure you, he has shaken my mind very considerably as to the orthodoxy of our Church."

"Where?" repeated Henry; "why where I have begged Rachel to look for them, and where you might expect to find them."

A Prayer-book was accordingly produced, and Henry pointed out from it, first of all from the Catechism, the view of the Church of England as to the number of sacraments necessary to salvation, viz. Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. He then shewed them, from the same place, her view of the nature of a sacrament, viz. "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." From this he went on to explain what the outward part of each of the sacraments was—in one case water, in the other bread and wine; and then the inward and spiritual grace—in the former, a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness, in the other "the body and blood of Christ."

"Yes," observed Charles, when his friend laid down the Prayer-book, "what you say is very true, and

M^cAdams is wrong. I must, however, confess that I never looked upon these matters in this light before; and I cannot but regard the sacraments with much higher veneration than I have hitherto been taught to do."

With this remark Rachel coincided; but Miss Croft said, "That she could not believe that Henry was right, for she always thought that the opinions he had just attributed to the Prayer-book were popish. She considered the sacraments as very good things, and very proper to be observed; but as to their possessing that inward spirit which he claimed for them, it was abhorrent to reason, and she could not believe it."

"Nevertheless," said Henry, "I trust that on further inquiry, you will at least allow that such is the view of the Prayer-book; and therefore will lay the blame of error upon it, and not upon me, as I am only undertaking to shew what are the doctrines of the Prayer-book, not to prove that they are right."

"You have now told us," remarked Charles, "what are the views of the Church of England upon these points; can you tell me what is the difference between ourselves and the Church of Rome on these two sacraments, and what objection you have to the opinions she holds upon them?"

"I fear," said Henry, "that even if we had time, I have not ability thoroughly to go into this question, which is a very long one properly to investigate; but I will give you, as well as I can, one or two objections that I have to the Church of Rome on this head; and which I conceive constitute some, at least, of the most important points of difference between us. In the first place, with regard to Baptism, I imagine that the Church of Rome does not attribute that importance to the vows and promises there made, which she ought to

do. I say nothing of her views of the efficacy of Baptism—I believe in that respect she agrees generally with our own Church; but it appears to me, that she does not regard the baptismal vow as of that great importance in preserving baptismal grace, which I have always been taught that the early Church, equally with ourselves, does.”

“What proof of this,” asked Charles, “should you adduce?”

“I should adduce,” replied Henry, “the other vows which at different periods of life she proposes to her members,—her vows of obedience, or of poverty, or of celibacy, or, as at the present time, her vows of temperance; all these I think are superfluous, and have a tendency to persuade men that their baptismal vows do not bind them sufficiently; that they are in themselves of so weak and trifling a nature, that by them alone a man is not bound to serve God with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength in every state of life. Now, I must say, that when this is the case,—when a man forgets the deep obligation of the baptismal vow, and the fearful loss he suffers by neglecting to keep it at all times and in every respect, I think that the doctrine of baptismal grace becomes perverted, and that many and most important errors arise. I hope I am not presumptuous in saying, that I believe these errors do exist among the Roman Catholics, and that they are attended with very serious evils to the members of that communion. With regard to the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, I have much stronger objections. In the first place, their strict definition to my mind appears irreverent and profane; again, they deny that there is any outward sign, or at least the outward sign is confounded with the inward part, or thing signified; this appears wrong, when we consider the meaning of the word sacra-

ment. But I have another objection, perhaps a greater one; I mean, their denial of the cup to the laity; I look upon this as a most grievous loss to all the lay members of the Romish Church; and I can only pray, that since that Church has thought fit to depart from our Saviour's institution and the practice of the primitive times, it may please God to put into their hearts to lay aside what appears so unwarrantable a practice. I esteem much the deep reverence with which they regard this blessed sacrament; and I could almost admire the very motive which induced them first of all to discontinue the cup to the laity, viz. a dread of profaning so holy a rite. I wish that in this respect, I mean so far as deep reverence is concerned, we were to copy their example; but I dare not be wise above what is written, and since our blessed Lord has said, 'Unless ye eat my flesh, and drink my blood, ye have no life in you,' I must condemn that order, whether it be considered as a matter of doctrine or of discipline, which denies the blood of Christ to the laity."

"They say," observed Charles, "that the blood of Christ is given along with the body, that both are contained under the appearance of bread, in the wafer."

"Yes," replied Henry, "they say so; but as such an assertion is neither borne out by the Holy Scriptures nor the belief or practice of the primitive Church, we are surely right in declining to receive it."

"I am greatly disposed to agree with you," said Charles; "but shall like to reflect upon all these matters quietly by myself, before I quite admit all you say. Thus much, however, I must allow; that on every point we have touched as yet, my mind is far more at rest than it has been; and I am certainly surprised that you, against whom I was warned as being a concealed Papist, appear likely to be the person, under

God, who is to prevent me from going over to the Church of Rome. Before quitting this subject, there is one other thing upon which I should like to have your opinion. I mean the frequency of communion."

"Not to-night," said Henry. "I am sure we have had enough of discussion for the present; Rachel begins to give symptoms of fatigue; and poor Miss Croft has been tired with us for this half-hour."

Both ladies disclaimed any fatigue.

"Well, then," said Henry, "to be honest, I am very tired myself; so, if you have no objection, we will postpone our further conversation until another evening."

"On one condition," replied Charles, "I will agree to this: which is, that you come to-morrow."

To this Henry assented; and in a short time the party separated, mutually pleased with each other, and all of them really obliged to Henry for the kind way in which he had answered their questions.

Miss Croft, however, in spite of appearances, could not satisfy herself but that, after all, he was a bit of a Papist at heart.



CHAPTER XIX.

Conversation concluded.

As soon as they assembled on the following evening, Charles began the conversation by renewing the subject which had closed their previous discussion.

"The point," he said, "upon which I wish to hear you speak," addressing himself to Henry, "is, the few opportunities afforded by the Church of England to her members of partaking of the Holy Communion. I am fully convinced in my own mind, that frequent Communion is necessary for the well-being of the soul. I understand from Mr. M'Adams—of course you will stop me if his assertion be incorrect—that in primitive times the early Christians communicated very frequently, in some instances as often as once a day, a practice observed by the Roman Church to this day. I read in the Gospels, of the disciples meeting together to break bread and pray, as though the breaking of bread was the chief cause of their meeting together. I must confess, therefore, that under these circumstances, I am not satisfied with the Church of England, which contents herself with feeding her children once a month, in many instances much less frequently, with the bread of life. Nay, hear me out," seeing that Henry was preparing to answer him,—“hear me out: I understand that in many of our cathedrals monthly Communion is the rule; and in several of our parish churches even this is considered too frequent, and the people are put off with a Communion four times or less in the year. Is not this sufficient reason to justify a person for leaving the Church of England, and going to a Church, if

I must not say *the* Church, where a more frequent Communion is observed?"

"But are you sure," said Henry, "that daily Communion is observed by the Church to which you allude?"

"Yes," replied Charles; "Mr. M'Adams says so."

"I fear that such is not the case," continued his friend; "I fear that the Roman Church, at the present time, has no more a daily Communion than we have."

"Have they not a daily mass," asked Charles, "and is not that the same as daily Communion?"

"By no means," replied Henry; "they have indeed the daily mass, and yet they have not in practice a daily Communion. The daily mass is celebrated generally by the priest alone, and all idea of Communion is practically lost in that of a Sacrifice. Even in Rome, I understand, that very rarely any besides the officiating priest communicate, except on Sundays; and indeed I have heard, that even on Sundays such is frequently the case. But, with regard to your charge, I must first of all deplore equally with yourself the present general practice of the Church of England. I agree with you, that a monthly Communion, or a two-monthly Communion, which, as you say, is all that is administered in many of our country parishes, is a custom neither sanctioned by Scripture nor the practice of the early Church. It proves, I fear, that in spiritual things we are at the present time in a very low condition; and it calls upon all of us to strive, each in our several stations, to do all in our power to remedy so sad a state of things. As to its justifying a person in leaving our Church, that, Charles, I cannot admit. In the first place, you must allow me to say, that the expression, of a person being justified in leaving the Church into which he was baptised, is one that I do not like; no man is justified in leaving his Church, unless

he is obliged to do it. I should, therefore, always use, when speaking of these things, the latter word ; and I certainly do not think that any member of the Church of England is obliged to leave her on account of her infrequent Communion ; even supposing that another branch of the Church offered to him privileges which his own did not. But in the present instance, you must not accuse the Church of England, as you appear to do, of sanctioning by her constitutions this denial of spiritual food to her children. Read over carefully her Communion-service, you will find nothing in it which will lead you to suppose that she intended the Holy Communion to be administered only once a month ; on the contrary, it appears very evident to me that she considers the Holy Communion should be administered at least once a week, on the Sunday ; and at all other times when there is a collect, epistle, and gospel appointed for the day ; but indeed, if a time should come when the priests and people are prepared for it, I see nothing in our service-book to prevent a daily Communion. By her constitutions, therefore, the Church of England on this point is not faulty, as you suppose. Her practice generally, as I admitted, is bad ; but surely this does not oblige a person to quit her Communion. If such were the case, what a fearful state of perpetual changes every branch of the Church would be in ! for no one can suppose that any portion of the Church is, in this state of probation, perfect in her practice. In this matter, my idea is, that persons who, like yourself, are craving for a better state of things, should set yourselves in earnest to bring it about ; not by unlawful means, such as you adopted when you first left Cambridge, but in every legitimate way ; chiefly, in my opinion, by earnest prayer, a regular use of every mean of grace you already possess, and a statement of your wants

and difficulties to the priest who is set over you. Many men who, like yourself, felt great loss from our present general practice, some few years back, set themselves earnestly to remedy the evil ; and the consequence has been, that in many parishes they have now regularly a weekly Communion ; and in some, this holy Sacrament is administered, not only on every Sunday, but on every feast-day when a particular collect, epistle, and gospel is assigned to it. You need not go far for an instance of this—you may see it in your own town ; as of course you are aware that now for some years Mr. Milles has a weekly communion in the parish-church."

Charles admitted this, but added, that it was pretty clear the Church of England could not properly recognise this practice, as he had frequently heard Mr. Milles called a Papist for doing it.

"With regard to calling Mr. Milles names, that," said Henry, "is no proof that he is what they call him, nor that the Church to which he belongs does not recognise those practices for the observance of which Mr. Milles is abused."

"It certainly appears," said Charles, "from your statement, and from a perusal of those parts of the Prayer-book to which you refer, that the Church of England not only sanctions, but supposes a more frequent Communion than is generally administered : and I cannot dispute your remarks, as to leaving the Church in which one is baptised."

"I am glad to hear you say so," replied Henry. "It is all nonsense, nay worse, to think that a man is obliged to leave his Church because he finds some things therein which he cannot approve of. You were baptised into the Church of England, and nothing but the most absolute necessity should induce you to quit her.

The case is something similar to that of a family: we are by nature born into an earthly family, have natural parents, to whom we are under certain obligations, and to whom we owe certain duties, which nothing but positive necessity can excuse us for neglecting. By grace we are born into another family; at Baptism the Church becomes our spiritual mother; and, in a different sense, we owe her the same obedience that we do to our natural parent; and are as much bound to remain with her, unless absolutely obliged to leave her shelter, as in the other case we are bound to remain under our paternal roof. What should you think of a person who left his home, because he saw that his parents were not faultless?"

"You are right," observed Charles; "I used the word *justified* incautiously, and quite agree with what you say on this part of the subject.—I must now call your attention to a different point, but one which, perhaps, is more important; I mean, the view that is taken by the Church of England as to there being no sacrifice in the blessed Eucharist."

In answer to this, Henry observed, that he felt himself incompetent to speak upon so deep and awful a subject. "I should certainly advise you," he said, "to apply for information to Mr. Milles; but if you please, will gladly lend you a work, which is, I believe, rather scarce, that will assist you very much in your inquiry; it is entitled 'The Unbloody Sacrifice,' written by Johnson, and is considered very good authority upon this head."

Charles expressed himself much obliged, and said that he would gladly read the work, and if necessary would afterwards consult Mr. Milles.

"May I read it, when Charles has finished?" asked Rachel, who had been a very attentive listener to the whole of the conversation.

"Certainly," replied Henry ; " I shall be very glad that you do so, as I imagine it will explain some matters connected with this most mysterious subject, with which you have hitherto been unacquainted."

" I can scarcely tell you," replied Rachel, " how much obliged I am to you and Charles for admitting me to these your conversations. I see things connected with religion in a very different light from that in which I did before ; and begin to perceive a reality and certainty in arriving at matters of faith, through the instrumentality of a visible Church, which I sought for in vain elsewhere. Unconsciously you have been removing many objections which I entertained ; and not only have destroyed the edifice which, from Mr. Campbell's instruction, I had erected, but have on its ruins built another, under which, when finished, I really entertain hopes of finding shelter."

" I told you, Rachel," said Charles, smiling, " that you would discover there was no truth in an invisible Church ; a Church which, without a known and recognised visible foundation, without a priesthood, without sacraments, could find no place for existence save in the brains of fanatics, and which must carry all who trusted it to infidelity."

" Yes," said Rachel, " you told me this ; but at the same time added, that you were sure, if we examined the matter fairly and honestly, I should go, where you then said you were going, to Rome. Whereas, it appears to me that our destination is likely to be nearer home ; and that we shall discover our only safe course is to remain where we are."

" Perhaps so," said Charles ; " but I have not quite done ; so, if Henry is not tired, I should like to put one or two more questions to him."

Henry, who now entertained great hopes that his

friends, after all their wanderings, would at last settle down in their own Church, expressed himself quite ready to go on with the subject.

"My next question, then," said Charles, "relates to the daily service: do you think that a person is obliged to leave the Church of England because she gives him only a public service once a week?"

"Certainly not," replied Henry. "However, in this case as in the other, the Church of England provides a daily service for her children: read over the preface to the Prayer-book, and you will there see that every curate, 'being at home, and not being otherwise reasonably hindered, shall say the same,' i. e. the daily service, 'in the parish church or chapel where he ministereth, and shall cause a bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the people may come to hear God's word, and to pray with him.' In this instance, therefore, the Church provides that which you wish to have; and instead of seceding from her, your duty in such a case is, as in the afore-mentioned matter, to labour as much as possible to bring about so desirable a custom. It is indeed much to be regretted, that the bishops do not take these things into their hands, and oblige the clergy in their respective dioceses to act up to the express commands so clearly laid down in the Book of Common Prayer."

Charles turned to the passage pointed out by Henry, and expressed himself perfectly satisfied upon this head. "There is yet," he said, "one other thing of which I should like to speak to-night, and then I will cease troubling you, at all events until I have weighed these matters quietly in my own mind. Mr. M'Adams has often told me, what from your statements, borne out as they are by the Prayer-book, I find to be true, viz. that there are very many clergymen in the Church of Eng-

R

land, who, not content with despising the order she gives as to practice, deny the doctrines she teaches. I mentioned to him this morning what you said last night on the subject of the blessed Eucharist: at first he said that you had made mis-statements; but upon shewing him the passages you pointed out in the Prayer-book, he admitted you were right, but added, there were many clergymen in our Church who taught contrary doctrines; and concluded by asking me what security I could possibly have that I was not in error, when so many clergymen preach heresy, and where the discipline is so lax that every man, priest or layman, does pretty much what seems best in his own eyes?"

"That our clergy preach heresy," said Henry, "is rather a strong expression; did he instance the particular heresies to which he alluded?"

"Yes," said Charles, "he instanced several. In one case, he said, he heard a clergyman lately deny our blessed Lord's humanity. Other clergymen, he said, he had heard who denied any real presence in the Eucharist; and others who denied baptismal regeneration. These, he said, were heresies; and that it was not safe for any one to remain in the English Church as long as these heresies were publicly taught without contradiction."

"It must certainly be admitted," replied Henry, "that these errors you have mentioned are very great and grievous ones, and I fear it must also be admitted that they are frequently taught by clergymen in our Church; but still I cannot allow that they are sufficient to oblige any person to leave our Church. Our Church herself does not hold them,—*that* you admit; the complaint is, that she does not prevent her ministers from teaching error; this, I grant, is a just cause for complaint. But the real state of the matter I believe to

be, that, under existing circumstances, she has not power to redress this evil: it is an evil, however, which, more or less, has ever existed, and probably ever will exist in the Church in its militant state. 'Needs must that offences come,' said our blessed Lord; 'There must also be heresies among you,' said St. Paul; 'There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies,' said St. Peter. The existence of them appears to be inevitable. It is of course most desirable that they should be checked, and that those who promulgate them should be prevented in their wicked course. But we should not mend matters by leaving our Church because these evils exist; depend upon it, go where we would, we should find as many or more. Most assuredly we should not mend the matter by going to Rome, as Mr. M'Adams probably advised you. No; our only safe plan is to remain where we are, do our duty in that position in which God has placed us, and pray God to make up in His good time those deficiencies which exist among us. My dear Charles," added Henry solemnly, "you may depend upon it, that if any cause should induce you to leave your own holy mother, you will repent it as long as you live. I can conceive few things more fatal to one's peace of mind on earth, and more likely to produce loss to us hereafter, than a restless dissatisfied spirit, which drives us away from the house and shelter under which Almighty God has placed us, because we do not find everything there as perfect as we could wish to have it. With regard to Rome, I would speak lightly of a sister's errors; but I must say, that when I look at her in her present state, whether as regards her inherent principles or her known practices, I do not hesitate to say, that by leaving your own Church to join her, you would incur evils of a very serious nature. We have

said some few things as regards the two sacraments necessary to salvation ; much more might be said upon the same subject. In addition to this, call to mind her doctrines and practices connected with purgatory, penance, the worship of the blessed Virgin, her invocation of saints, works of supererogation, her prayers in a foreign language, the supremacy of the Pope, her doctrine of indulgences, and many other things that might be mentioned ; call these to mind, I say, and you must confess, I feel sure, that your soul is in safer keeping with your own Church than with her. Let me quote to you a few words on this subject from the writings of an eminent English confessor and divine ; one who by his life and conduct gave evidence of the excellency of that Church by whose food and doctrine his pious soul was nourished to an height of Christian perfection well worthy of our imitation. I speak of the non-juror Hickes. ‘I verily believe,’ are his words, ‘that the Church of England, as it now stands, without any further reformation, is apostolical in doctrine, worship, and government ; and would have been esteemed by the faithful in all ages, from the time of the Apostles, a pure and sound member of the Catholic Church. I heartily thank Almighty God, by whose good providence I have been bred up in her communion, and called to the great honour of being one of her priests ; and I beseech Him of His infinite goodness to give all the clergy and people grace to live up strictly to her principles of piety, loyalty, justice, charity, purity, temperance, and sobriety. I am sure it must be ours and not her fault, if we be not the best Christians, the best subjects, and the best friends and best neighbours in the world.’ Yes,” said Henry, warming as he spoke, “let us live up to the principles of our Church. Let us pray and strive, each in our station, to have those principles fully

developed. Let us be as pious towards God, as loyal to our Queen, as loving to our neighbour, as she would have us to be, and we shall need to entertain no thoughts of change. Our Church, be well assured of this, be she perfect or not, is quite perfect enough for us. We do not realise the privileges she offers; let us not complain, then, that she gives us no more; rather let us thankfully make use of what she does give us; and if ever we become, what I pray God we may become, a better and a holier people, we need not fear but that the Head of the Church will provide for us that heavenly food which is best adapted to our state. Let me give you one more quotation, at the risk of wearying you, from Bishop Beveridge. 'Be you,' says he, 'as pious towards God, as loyal to our Queen, as sober in yourselves, as faithful to your friends, as loving to your enemies, as charitable to the poor, as just to all, as our Church enjoins you; in a word, be but you as conformable to her as she is to the Catholic Church in all things, and my life, my eternal life for yours, you cannot but be happy for evermore.'"

With these words Henry concluded. All were evidently much affected by them; and Charles said that his friend's remarks had made so deep an impression upon his mind, that he was now determined to consult Mr. Milles, and seek from him that information on other parts of the subject which he required.

Rachel added, that she should do the same, as there were some matters she did not quite understand, and upon which she should like to have the vicar's advice. "And now, Henry," she said, "you must again accept the warm thanks of one at least of this party, who feels most deeply indebted to you for your kindness. I was on the point of quitting the Church of England; God, in His mercy, be thanked that I have been

stayed: to you, Henry, under Him, I owe a debt of gratitude I can never repay."

Here stopping, and blushing deeply, as though she had said more than she ought to have done, she rose from her chair, and retiring from the room, wished her brother and his friend good night. Miss Croft accompanied her; and in a short time Henry took his departure, leaving Charles in a happier frame of mind than he had been in for a long time.

CHAPTER XX.

Something very ridiculous.

What, I!—I love!—I sue!—I seek a wife!

SHAKSPEARE.

FOR some months after the above conversation, Henry's visits at Weston were very frequent; and he shortly discovered that when Rachel was present, his remarks were chiefly addressed to her; and that in different excursions with the Fords, his arm was always offered to her, and great disappointment experienced if any thing occurred to withdraw her from his side. This went on for some time before he clearly saw to what his attentions were tending. Miss Croft, however, who was better acquainted with these matters than her cousin, thought it right at length to give him a hint, which at once opened his eyes to the truth, and convinced him, that unless he entertained serious thoughts of proposing to Rachel for his wife, he was acting dishonourably in continuing his visits any longer. Miss Croft's remarks were made with great delicacy and judgment, but in such a way as to shew Henry that

he had no alternative but to come at once to some decision. It was a subject not to be treated lightly ; and he resolved to postpone any further visits at Weston until he made up his mind as to what he would do.

Rachel, he could not help confessing to himself, had almost insensibly gained his affections, and had become in a great degree essential to his happiness. I know not how it is, he thought within himself ; I have known her for many years, and yet until lately have never entertained a wish to cultivate any feelings beyond those of friendship towards her ; but now the case is altered, friendship is out of the question,—she must either return my love, or for the future we must part.—And if she did return his love, was there no obstacle to their union ? Yes ; he could not but fear that Rachel's principles were by no means as firmly fixed as he should wish those of his wife to be. She had but just escaped falling into infidelity ; and although he believed her doubts as to the truth of Christianity were now past, and that she was really anxious to live as a consistent member of the Church, still there was enough in her late conduct to make Henry pause before he took any decisive step. Acting upon this determination, he curtailed very much his visits to Weston, although he did not entirely discontinue them ; and when there, his attentions to her were rare and constrained, apparently rather the result of necessity than of inclination.

Rachel perceived at once the alteration in Henry's conduct ; but had no idea as to the cause that produced it. She feared she had offended him by some foolish remark, or in some other way ; but yet Henry was not a person to take offence at trifles. Indeed she had frequently observed him pass over real injuries, and in a few hours after apparently forget that he had at all been injured.

She resolved to speak to him on the subject, and ask whether she had really done any thing to annoy him. This her cousin advised her not to do; saying, that her ideas of his change in conduct were either fanciful, or if real, he had doubtlessly good and sufficient reasons for the course he was taking.

Rachel was not altogether satisfied with this advice, but thought it better to follow it so far as to refrain from seeking any explanation from Henry. In consequence of this, some time elapsed, during which a coolness gradually arose between them. When Henry came to Weston, his conversation was chiefly addressed to Charles, who was now deeply engaged in studying the works of some of our best English divines; and when he did approach Rachel for the purpose of addressing her, which was seldom, his remarks were such, that any thing like conversation was out of the question;—and yet, in spite of all his resolutions, and his determination not to see her excellences, Henry's fears gradually subsided; and whether from wishes or convictions, he certainly began to think that she was as high principled as she was amiable. It becomes us to say, that these convictions were founded on good and sufficient grounds. He observed that she was walking along hand in hand with her brother, to a full assurance of Catholic truth; and that Mr. Milles had now admitted her to the holy Communion, a matter which weighed much with him, as he knew the vicar was very particular in such things. All this had its effect, and in consequence, his diurnal visits to Weston were recommenced, and he again took opportunities of being civil and attentive to Rachel. His renewed attentions at first, naturally enough, she received very coldly, but afterwards, as was also natural, more kindly. In fact, to make a long story short, they were falling—for I sup-

pose it is a fall—in love. The effects of this became shortly apparent to Millicent Bradwell. Henry was low-spirited and absent, and was perpetually finding out some excuse or other for walking up to the Hall. She saw how it was long before her husband did; but not feeling quite sure upon the matter, did not like to raise unnecessary suspicions. In a quiet way, however, she used to have her sly remarks at Henry, and told him occasionally that he looked very pale, and had a great deal of business at Weston, &c. Henry blushed usually, but said nothing. He did not like to confess; for besides his uncertainty as to the state of Rachel's affections, he felt that it was by no means improbable that Mr. and Mrs. Ford would place an insurmountable barrier to their union. Once or twice he thought he would tell Bradwell; but when the opportunity came of doing so, he felt alarmed and shy, and so kept his secret. At length, when his visits were become a matter of daily occurrence, Bradwell's eyes opened, and he began to think that it was possible that Henry might entertain feelings somewhat similar to such as had possessed him some twenty or thirty years ago. With these views his wife concurred, and explained what she had long seen.

"It is very extraordinary," he remarked, "that I did not observe this before; he certainly does go to the Hall every day, and I have caught him once or twice writing verses in the counting-house. Very good joke, indeed; Henry in love, how very ridiculous!"

"You did not think so once," observed his wife, with a smile.

"No," he said, "I was young and foolish then. Well, well, he is young now; but I'll look after him; he must not steal a march upon his godfather."

Having made this resolution, on the following morn-

ing, at breakfast, he began: "Henry, you are very often up at Weston with the Fords now."

Henry had been in the habit of going up frequently to Weston from the time that the Fords went there, with the exception of a short period, as we have seen. There was nothing, therefore, very extraordinary in Henry's visits at Weston; on the present occasion, however, Bradwell's remark raised a blush in Henry's face, and he hesitated a little, while he admitted that he had been there of late rather frequently.

"*Rather frequently*," repeated Bradwell, with a smile. "I don't know what you call *rather frequently*, but I believe you have been there every day for the last month. I call that *very* frequently. Eh, is such the case?"

Henry admitted that it was.

"Then, I suppose," said Bradwell, "you have some attraction there?"

Henry's countenance assumed a somewhat darker tinge, (do not let the reader misunderstand me—it was not an angry tinge,) while he said, that Weston was a very pleasant house; Mr. and Mrs. Ford were very kind; and he had latterly been often engaged in very interesting conversation with Charles.

"Perhaps," added Bradwell slyly, "with Rachel too?"

Henry saw there was nothing for it but to confess; he therefore, after a moment's consideration, replied, "Yes, with Rachel also."

"Come, then," said Bradwell, "you must forgive me, Henry, for probing a little deeply into this matter, for which the great love I bear you must be my excuse. I suppose I may infer from your manner that Rachel Ford has been *the* attraction at Weston?"

"Yes," said Henry; "it is right that I should speak

the truth in all cases, and especially to you ; I will therefore frankly admit that I have a very great regard for Rachel, and that my feelings towards her are of a warmer and more tender nature than our long acquaintance and friendship only would account for."

"Am I to understand," asked Bradwell, "that you are engaged to her?"

"No," said Charles, smiling, "I have not quite arrived at that ; I have not proposed, nor indeed should I have done so without acquainting and consulting you."

"Perhaps not," replied Bradwell, with a smile ; "but I fancy you have gone a good long way, as the phrase is, without consulting me."

"Well," said Henry, "I fear I must admit that I have ; and yet I am not sure that Rachel would accept me, even if I did propose."

"That you will propose," observed Bradwell, "I do not doubt, nor do I feel much doubt as to Rachel's accepting you ; but what Mr. Ford may say to it, is a different question. And now let me speak seriously ; for it is a very serious matter. In the first place, I think it your duty to ascertain what Mr. Ford thinks of your pretensions for his daughter. He is living in a more expensive way than you can possibly afford, and perhaps would not like that Rachel should be deprived of any of those comforts and luxuries she enjoys at home. Besides this, I fancy he holds his head above us who are actively engaged in trade, and probably might wish that his daughter should marry some one who would give her what by the world is esteemed a more acknowledged position than you could give her. But beyond all this, and far more important, I would have you be quite sure as to Rachel Ford's religious opinions : observe, I wish to say nothing in disparagement of them, beyond what I really think my duty to you obliges me to say.

From conversations which, at different times, she has held with Mrs. Bradwell, I have reason to fear that she entertains some very erroneous opinions with regard to the Church ; and if such be the case, it is impossible there could be any real happiness between you, should you marry. I ought, perhaps, to say that, for the last few months, her expressions betray a considerable change in her opinions ; but still, I should fear that her mind is undecided ; and if so, you cannot be too careful in what you do."

Henry thanked Bradwell very kindly for his paternal advice, which he promised to follow ; at the same time mentioning to him the conversations he had held with Charles Ford, and stating that both he and his sister were now, and had for some time been, receiving instruction from Mr. Milles, and were in regular attendance at the vicarage.

"This," said Bradwell, "I was not aware of, as the vicar seldom mentions such matters ; it looks well."

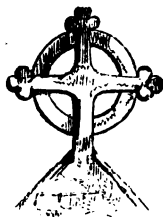
"I know," continued Henry, "that love is said to be blind, and that, under existing circumstances, I am perhaps not the best person in the world to give an unprejudiced opinion of Rachel's qualities, but I think you will admit that she is a very superior girl, well educated, and, as far as you can judge, highly principled."

"Yes," answered Bradwell, "I must admit that, in these respects, the object of your choice is what you describe. And if her opinions in Church matters are correct, there is no girl whom I would prefer seeing your wife. But depend upon it, Henry, that whatever the world at large may think about it, there is very little probability of real happiness between married persons of different religious persuasions. Each wishes to go to his or her place of worship ; there are per-

petual differences of opinion as to the way in which the children shall be educated; and a hundred other things of a like nature. Besides, just picture to yourself the deep sorrow you, as a Churchman, must always experience, if your wife, the chief object of your affections on earth, was living in schism. I can scarcely conceive a greater trial than such a thing as this."

"Well," said Henry, "I will only say, that I shall feel much obliged by your calling on the Vicar, and consulting him on these matters; and I promise, that what you and he decide upon as the proper course for me, I will follow. Whatever my wishes are, I feel that I owe this duty to my godfather and my priest, and I am willing to pay it.—And now let us turn to another matter, on which there is less prospect of our differing in opinion—the new church. Mr. Solid has sent the building-plans; so, if you please, we will look them over."

To this Bradwell assented; and the plans were produced.



CHAPTER XXI.

A Church built and endowed as it ought to be done.

The zeal of ancient days is fast kindling throughout the land. Men are beginning to build churches with the pious liberality of those primitive times when a desire to honour God was the first consideration, and personal luxury and proud independence gave place to virtuous self-denial and orderly obedience.

Ancient Models.

"I SEE," said Henry, after looking over the estimate attached to the plans, "that the expense of the building is to be 4000*l.*; and that there is to be no tower. I am sorry we are not to have a tower."

"Yes," replied Bradwell, "I also regret it. But Solid said that he could not build the body of such a church as I described, and such as he here proposes to build, under 4000*l.* The chancel, you see," (referring to the plans,) "is very large and handsome. I would gladly have given 1000*l.* more for the tower, which is his estimate, but I am afraid that we must not think of that under our present circumstances."

"Well, better times may come," said Henry; "and then the tower must be added, and a good handsome one, I hope, it will be. You think," he continued, "that it would not do to take 1000*l.* from the sum fixed for the endowment?"

"No," said Bradwell; "6000*l.* is as little as we can well endow the church with, as there are to be no pew-rents. By the way," added he, "just reach down the paper of agreement drawn up between us on this matter, as I have forgotten some of the points there settled."

Henry took down the paper, which, having opened, he read as follows:—

“The outline of an agreement between Messrs. Bradwell and Howard, to build and endow a church for the use of their workmen and others in the parish of Preston. 1. That 10,000*l.* be taken from the property of the firm, to build and endow a church. 2. That 4000*l.* be devoted to the building, 6000*l.* to the endowment. 3. That the site be fixed on land within a short distance of the factory belonging to the firm. 4. That any land belonging to the firm be offered for the purpose of a site. 5. That the vicar choose the site. 6. That the vicar have the exclusive patronage of the living. 7. That there be no pews.”

“I do not think there is any thing else that need be mentioned,” said Bradwell.

“I am not aware of any thing,” answered Henry.

Some further conversation ensued ; when Bradwell proposed they should go to the vicarage, and unfold to Mr. Milles their plans, which had hitherto been kept concealed from him.

The Vicar was much surprised at the intelligence they brought.

“My dear friends,” said he, “as soon as he had heard their proposal, “I am indeed delighted at this news, for news it is to me. I am delighted at it, not only for the advantage it will bring to a portion of my flock, who are greatly in need of a more strict superintendence than I am able to give them, but also on account of the good example it sets to all masters of factories ; acknowledging as it does, in a practical way, that they are in a measure responsible for the morals of their workmen, and are in duty bound to provide pastors to instruct them and to feed their souls, and churches wherein they may worship God. May you live long, and see the good effects of your munificent conduct !”

Bradwell thanked the Vicar for his kind expressions towards him, "which," he said, "he attributed to their long and ardent friendship. I have done," he added, "nothing more than what you have often said we ought to do. From the pulpit and in private conversation, I have frequently heard you say that the masters of factories are bound to provide spiritual instruction for their workmen; nay, you will remember that we have often discussed this matter in former years, when I had little idea of ever being able to put into execution what I wished. It has long been the chief desire of my heart; it formed one of the agreements between Henry Howard and myself when we entered into partnership; I have looked upon it as a simple act of duty, nothing more; and I am sure that when your first feelings of surprise are over, which, by the by," added Bradwell, smiling, "are by no means complimentary to my sincerity, knowing, as you did, my opinions,—when these are over, you will regard it just as you do your own personal sacrifices, which indeed are far greater than mine; you will look upon it as that which in reality it is—an act of duty, tardily and imperfectly performed, and unworthy of the acceptance of our heavenly Master, to whom all we possess belongs."

Bradwell now proposed that the Vicar should inspect the plans for the church; upon which he observed, "You must give us your opinion."

The plans were accordingly unrolled, and Mr. Milles expressed himself fully satisfied with them. He then read over the rules they had agreed upon, with which he was equally pleased. "I am indeed glad," he said, "to find that you intend to have all the sittings free, and to provide an income for the clergyman independent of pew-rents."

"The income," said Bradwell, "is very small; but

our circumstances do not at present admit of our giving more. I may mention to you, that it is our intention to increase it as soon as we are able."

"I feel sure," continued the Vicar, "that the present system of providing incomes for the clergymen by pew-rents has a very great tendency to introduce novelties of doctrine, and to lower the standard of holiness which ought to exist among us. The world at large is opposed to the strict self-denying precepts of the Gospel; and in an age like this, when all respectable persons profess Christianity, there is but too much reason to fear that the mass of mankind, who will not bear self-denial will desire to have a gospel of their own, and will pay men for preaching it; the unprincipled among the clergy—and unhappily there are unprincipled men among us as well as among the laity—will preach that doctrine which will pay them best; and even better men will be in danger of being induced to keep back something of the truth, from the constant pressure of the temptation that will bear upon them."

"I must say," replied Bradwell, "that, in my opinion, there are already symptoms of this very great evil in the false statements which at the present time may often be heard on the doctrine of justification by faith. Men may call these popular views what they please, but they are in reality neither more nor less than Antinomianism; and I feel assured of this, that Antinomianism will always be popular among those persons who wish to keep up a religious appearance with the world, and who are willing to serve God only so long as they may serve mammon too, and escape that life of self-denial which is the only test of a true and sincere faith."

With these remarks the Vicar concurred; and added, that he thought this plan of open free sittings most ad-

vantageous. "In the first place, pews," he remarked, "make a distinction between the rich and poor in the house of God, where, if any where, we should all appear as children of the same fallen parents, fellow-heirs of the same gracious promises, and brethren together in Christ. In a lower point of view, also, they appear to me a great evil: they certainly miserably deform our ecclesiastical buildings; and most earnestly do I wish that they were pulled down in every cathedral and church in our land."

"And what do you think," asked Henry, after a pause, "of our plan of building without a tower?"

"I think," replied the Vicar, "the plan a very good one. In these days men wish to have as much as possible for their money; and you will probably remember that in the case of the church on the western side of the town, Mr. Smith refused to subscribe unless they had a spire. The consequence was, that they were obliged to spend 500*l.* upon it, which could ill be spared, and to deprive the body of the church of that sum. You are, of course, aware that your plan is not new."

"I should be sorry if it was," remarked Bradwell; "for in spite of the enlightened views of the nineteenth century, I must confess that I have a kind of natural dislike to new plans. But, as you observe, we were aware that many of our cathedrals and parish churches were not built at once. A chancel perhaps first, then the nave, then an aisle; the tower afterwards, and so forth."

"You see, Mr. Milles," said Henry, addressing the Vicar, "we are to have a fald-stool and sedilia. How shall you like this? I fancy," he added, smiling, "that we shall then put to shame your large reading-desk, and the oak chairs you have at the altar in the parish

church. By the way, Mr. Milles, why do you not make use of the sedilia instead of the chairs? It would be much pleasanter, I should think, for the clergyman, as well as more accordant with primitive usage. You will forgive me, I feel sure, for this question, although perhaps it appears presumptuous in me to ask it."

"I'll tell you my reason," replied the Vicar: "there are such things in the world, Henry, as prejudices; and there are a great many people at the present day who are deeply affected by them, in many instances very foolishly, but perhaps naturally. I should like, as much as yourself, to have a fald-stool at the parish church, and to get rid of the oak chairs to which you object, and to use the sedilia; but were I to do so, I should very materially lessen my powers of usefulness among my flock. As it is, even in restoring the daily service, the weekly communion, and the observance of the fasts and festivals of the Church, I have met with very considerable opposition: these I considered it necessary to restore, as, independent of their absolute value in themselves, our Church most positively enjoins them. But with regard to minor matters—matters upon which our directions are not so positive—I have ever endeavoured to act very cautiously, from a fear of offending weak brethren. The time will, I trust, arrive when the people at large will see the propriety of recurring to our old usages; I mean, of course, the usages sanctioned by our own Church; and then they can be restored without the danger of giving offence. Till that period comes, I go on quietly saying prayers in the large wooden desk, and make use of the oak chairs, instead of the older, and, as you observe, the more proper sedilia."

Bradwell had listened very attentively to what the Vicar said; and then replied, "Do you think that these

remarks apply to our proposed plan? as, if you do, I will most gladly yield the point."

"No," said Mr. Milles, "I do not. In a new church the case is different from that of an old one. I started by saying that I prefer the old paths in rites and ceremonies, as well as in doctrines; but that, as a matter of expediency in my case, I retain the new. With you the matter will be different. You are building a new church, and think fit to build it on an old model. There may be a few remarks made upon it, but probably nothing more; the people will look upon it as a matter of slight moment, and in a short time become accustomed to it. No; far from wishing you to introduce the innovations which have of late years crept in among us, I am very glad that you have resolved to build after the old fashion."

Some further observations were made upon the size of the font—which it was resolved should be large enough for immersion—and on other matters, when Bradwell and Henry departed, having promised to meet the Vicar on the following day to choose an eligible site for the church.

"You forgot to speak of my little affair," said Henry, as they were leaving the house.

Bradwell smiled, and retraced his steps to the vicarage to fulfil his promise.



CHAPTER XXII.

Conclusion.

Now strike your sailes, yee jolly mariners,
For we be come into a quiet rode,
Where we must land some of our passengers,
And light this weary vessel of her lode.

SPENSER.

WHEN Bradwell returned to the Vicar, he at once introduced the subject of Henry Howard and Rachel Ford.

"You will, I dare say," remarked Bradwell, "be as greatly surprised in this matter as I was. I had not the least suspicion of it until within a very few days since, when my wife (and ladies' eyes, I find, are very sharp in these affairs) remarked that Henry was very frequently at Weston; and added, that she suspected he was forming an attachment to Rachel."

"As to my suspecting it," replied the Vicar, "I never had any experience in these things, and have as little idea of the way in which people make love, as I have of the way in which they make soap. When a boy, I remember, I made an attempt in that way with my tutor's daughter, but it was a miserable failure; so I suppose I went the wrong way to work. As to Henry loving Rachel more than as an old friend, such a thought never entered my mind."

"But now that you know it," said Bradwell, "what do you think of it?"

"Think of it?" said the Vicar, "why, I think that he will be a very fortunate fellow if he carries her off. Rachel Ford is an extremely clever, nice, and what is more, a very good girl."

"I know," replied Bradwell, "that you would not say this, if you had any doubts as to her attachment to the Church."

"Certainly not," said the Vicar.

"My wife and myself," continued Bradwell, "entertained some fears on this head; but I suppose they were groundless."

"Whatever they *were*," answered the Vicar, "they are groundless now. Rachel Ford is as much attached to the Church now, as either you or I; and I can tell you, understands a great deal on the subject. Thanks to Master Henry, I fancy, you need entertain no apprehensions on this point. Rachel is a good Churchwoman, and knows why she is so, which is what few girls in these days do know. Of course you have heard," continued the Vicar, "of Mrs. Marles' reports of poor Rachel and her brother Charles."

"Yes," said Bradwell, "that, indeed, was one cause of our fears. She told my wife that Rachel had positively left the Church and joined the Socinians, and that Charles was become a Papist. Poor woman, her account of their conversion, as she called it, was most amusing, although very distressing. Mr. M'Adams and Campbell, she said, were both of them emissaries of the Pope, and in league with the men at Oxford to destroy the Church of England. That it was well understood among them as to the course to be adopted; and that Rachel Ford was to remain with the Socinians for a short time only, for appearance-sake, as she termed it,—as the Papists were afraid that the Emancipation Bill

would be cancelled if they made too many converts at once—and that then she was to go over to Rome. After this the old lady concluded with a long attack upon poor Fitzhugh, who, she said, was far gone, and as bad as many of the others; that he now really baptised the children after the second lesson; and kept his congregation so long in church that their dinners were spoiled. ‘I am sure,’ she added, ‘I shall not go to St. Paul’s much longer, for I should not be surprised if we were soon to have the daily service.’”

“Poor woman,” remarked the Vicar, “it is a sad pity that she does carry about such stuff. Thus far, however, is true, that Charles and Rachel have had a most providential escape. They have been brought up in the ultra-protestant school; and when attacked by the arguments of M‘Adams and Campbell, both of them very clever men, were unable to answer. It is a curious thing that their minds should have run off into these two opposite channels, but so it was; and I cannot but think that, humanly speaking, they would both have fallen, had not Henry Howard stepped in, and taught them the real doctrines held by the Church of England. I have seen them very frequently of late, and had much conversation with them on the points wherein they doubted, but have had little more to do than explain and enlarge upon the positions laid down by Henry.”

“I am sincerely glad,” said Bradwell, “at what you have told me; and shall now take the first opportunity of informing Henry of what you say, and relieving his mind from its present anxiety.”

“Tell him,” said the Vicar, “to mind what he is about, or he will fail; these affairs are not so easily managed.”

"Shall I mention to him," asked Bradwell, smiling, "the tutor's daughter, and tell him to come to you for the benefit of your experience?"

"No, no," said the Vicar, "'no more of that, Hal, an thou lovest me.'"

Some few remarks were made upon other matters, when Bradwell took his departure. During the evening he told Henry what the Vicar had said. Henry of course was much delighted; this, however, was somewhat damped by the determined cross-fire he had to sustain during the evening from Bradwell and his wife. The family chroniclers report that he slept little that night; and on the following morning went up to Weston to disclose his love.

It would ill become us to divulge all our hero said upon this occasion; thus far, however, we feel justified in stating, that upon arriving at the Hall he was shewn into the library, where fortunately for him, most of my readers would say, Rachel was alone. For some time he stammered and stuttered, and said so many foolish things, that Rachel began to entertain some apprehensions as to the sanity of her visitor. He also spoke of her charms,—a subject he had never touched upon before, and of which, whatever she might think herself, she always imagined him to be entirely unconscious. At length Miss Croft came in; and Henry, who saw that his opportunity was lost, at all events for that time, took up his hat, and with no very enviable feelings wished them good morning. Arrived at home, he met the Vicar, who, upon seeing the look of disappointment on Henry's face, fancied that his young friend had proved as ill a suitor as himself; and mentioned his fears to Mrs. Bradwell. The real state of the case, however, came out during the evening; and on the

lowing morning Henry started off again to make a second attempt. In this he was more successful, and, after considerable hesitation, made known to Rachel the purport of his visit. Rachel was of course greatly surprised, as all ladies in such circumstances are, but was at length convinced that there was nothing very extraordinary in Henry's loving her, and admitted that for some time she had almost loved him. The explanations over, Henry was sent to her father, with whom he passed a very uncomfortable half hour: after this Bradwell fortunately called, to whom the case was referred as to some particulars connected with settlements, &c., when the marriage was declared feasible; and Mr. Ford very heartily congratulated Henry as his future son-in-law.

At first there were some objections raised by Mrs. Ford, who had at one period settled in her mind that Rachel was an eligible match for any son of Lord Duberley's, or at least for a Werden or Stanley; but gradually these visions of greatness, one after the other, disappeared; and upon Mr. Ford's reminding her of their own real station in life, she consented that her daughter should marry a man whose parents belonged to the same class as herself and husband. Charles was delighted; he had always felt a great regard for Henry, which, interrupted as it had been at different intervals for short periods, still remained unabated. His respect for him had never ceased,—and that, he observed, afforded the best prospect of his sister's happiness. "For," as he added, "I may, perhaps, be foolishly tempted to regard a man of bad principles, but I could never respect him."

Mrs. Marles declared, it was the most extraordinary thing she ever heard of, and only wondered that her

friend should marry a daughter to one of that abominable set, who, if not papists, were next door to it ; and who, among their other enormities, thought nothing of putting away their wives, on a plea of living in celibacy.

Mrs. Dewis expressed herself equally surprised, although not so much offended. She had known Henry, she said, from an infant ; and although Mr. Bradwell and the Vicar had done all in their power to lead him astray, their attempts were unsuccessful ; he was a gentleman now, and yet as kind and friendly to his workmen and dependents as if in the same position in which his father had been.

Ann Croft was really pleased. She had seen and admired Henry's consistency of conduct, from the time of her coming to Weston, and often said that if all Churchmen lived as he did, she should have no objection to becoming a Churchwoman. In the conversations, also, between Henry and her cousins, to which she had been an attentive listener, she learnt much on the subject of the real nature of the Church, and already entertained considerable doubts as to the safety of remaining any longer in schism.

We must so far anticipate the date of our tale, as to inform our readers, that Ann's prejudices, although of long standing, were eventually overcome, and that she is now a regular attendant at the parish church, having relinquished all connexion with Dissenters.

In due time the marriage was solemnised, and Henry and his bride took up their residence in a small house belonging to the firm. Here they lived in a quiet and unostentatious way. Their income was good, as, independent of the profits from trade, Rachel brought with her a handsome fortune ; but their furniture and

manner of living were much like that of the Bradwells, and excited, again, the same surprise, and called forth the same remarks from Mrs. Marles and her friends.

Nevertheless they lived up to their income ;—not in the way, however, in which that phrase is commonly understood, viz. by spending all upon themselves. Their own luxuries and comforts they curtailed as much as possible, in order to have much to give away to others. This they spent freely ; and so far from complaining of the many calls that were made upon their purse, rejoiced in every good opportunity that was given them of laying up their treasure in heaven, where they knew neither moth nor rust do corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.

The first stone of the new church was laid on the day of their marriage ; they watched its progress with great interest, and had the satisfaction of seeing their first-born child baptised in the large font on the day of consecration. That day was indeed one of rejoicing to the whole party who had been instrumental in the work. Poor Bradwell's emotions it is impossible to describe ; joy followed joy so close one after the other, that from very fulness they took the guise of grief.

Mr. Hall, the long-tried and faithful curate at the parish church, was appointed pastor of the flock assigned to the new district. The Bishop preached the consecration sermon, and exhorted the persons assembled, of whom Bradwell's workmen formed a large portion, to be thankful for the additional privileges vouchsafed to them, and to be careful to make a proper use of them. After the administration of the holy Communion, which followed the sermon, the alms collected, amounting to nearly 100*l.*, were distributed among the poor com-

municants in the town, by whom the consecration of St. Peter's Church will long be remembered with lively gratitude.

In the afternoon, Henry's child was baptised; the Vicar and Charles Ford standing sponsors. As soon as the service was over, before they left the vestry, Henry placed in Mr. Hall's hands a cheque for 200*l.*, to purchase an organ, a thank-offering from his wife and himself to God for His late mercies vouchsafed unto her.

In the course of the evening, Bradwell's health was proposed by the Bishop, who dined with him on the occasion. His Lordship made many and appropriate comments upon the circumstances connected with the events they had during the day been engaged in; and spoke in hopeful terms of the approach of a time, when rich men, instead of withholding their money from acts of charity and goodness, as had been the case too much of late years, would thankfully consecrate it to the service of God and His Church.

When the Bishop sat down, Bradwell rose to return thanks, but his heart was too full; he made one or two ineffectual attempts to speak; words failed, but his tears spoke more than words could have uttered.

The Fords were present at the consecration and at the subsequent events that took place, and learnt a lesson which was not thrown away upon them. Charles Ford, who had now imbibed a thorough knowledge of Church principles, resolved, in his own mind, to mend matters, as far as he could, at St. Paul's. In pursuance of this object, he held many conversations with his father on the subject; and his endeavours were, at length, so far crowned with success, as that Mr. Ford agreed to purchase all the pews at a fair valuation,

and to place in their stead open benches, the purchase-money to be laid out in some good investment, for the benefit of the clergyman. By this means, a certain income was secured, and the patron freed from the necessity of appointing a popular preacher, who, under the pew-rent system, was the only person that could secure a livelihood.

After some time, Mr. Fitzhugh left; and a successor was nominated, at Mr. Milles' recommendation, who, walking in the steps of his brother clergy at Preston, obeys in all points the directions of the Prayer-book; thus affording to the three congregations there, those privileges to which, as members of the Church of England, they are, by her positive enactments, entitled.

There is little more to be told. In due time, as my readers will readily suppose, a tower was added to St. Peter's; and, in a few years afterwards, at different intervals, a peal of bells and a clock. Schools had preceded the building of the church; and a pleasant cottage, belonging to Bradwell, was converted into a parsonage, and presented to the living.

Many years have now elapsed since the above events took place. Bradwell is still alive, but alone; his wife has preceded him to the "land which is very far off," and yet close to us all. She died in peace with God, and with all mankind: her remains rest in the churchyard at St. Peter's, and the beautiful coloured window over the altar attests the love her husband bore her.

Henry and his wife have now reached what is termed middle age, and continue in the same pious course in which they began their married life. They are a blessing to each other, to their children, and to all around them; and in the conviction of a sincere but

imperfect obedience to God's laws, they experience that peace which the world can neither give nor take away, and dwell with thankfulness upon the prospect of the better country, to which, through the merits and mediation of a Saviour, they hope, in God's good time, to come.



AMBROSE ELTON.



HERMITAGE CHURCH.

To face p. 189.

The church was like a wild bird's nest,
Closely embower'd and trimly drest;
And thither young and old repair,
Each holy day, for praise and prayer.



AMBROSE ELTON.

CHAPTER I.

The calm delights
Of unambitious piety he chose,
And learning's solid dignity; though born
Of knightly race, nor wanting powerful friends.
Hither, in prime of manhood, he withdrew
From academic bowers.

WORDSWORTH.

GEORGE ELTON, vicar of Hermitage, in the diocese and county of Hereford, was a man of good family, being the eldest son of a younger brother of Sir Ralph Elton, a Yorkshire baronet: on the mother's side his connexions were not less respectable. I like to be particular in these matters. At the age of twenty-eight he married Susan Fairfield, a girl some six years younger than himself, who although more faultless in other matters than girls generally are, was guilty of being poor. This in the eyes of Mr. Elton's relatives was a transgression utterly inexcusable. He might have married a daughter of Sir John Harum, the wild fox-hunting baronet, whose life was spent principally among his dogs and a set of boozing companions, and whose children were trained up in a far less careful manner than his hounds in the kennel. Or he might

have married the only daughter of Mr. Thibuck, the heiress of a man who had amassed an immense fortune by knavery and dishonesty. But to marry the pious and well-educated daughter of a poor country gentleman was a very serious crime, and such as called forth their severest animadversions. In consequence of this, as is usual in these cases, his connexions refused to afford him any further countenance, and by degrees dropped all intimacy with him.

There was one person, however, who regarded the matter in a different light,—an aunt, with whom Mr. Elton, who was left an orphan at an early age, had been brought up; and who being a religious-minded woman, did not see that marrying a poor girl, as long as they had enough to live upon with economy, was the great sin that his other connexions represented it to be. Lady Bruton, therefore, such was his aunt's name, kept up a connexion with the Eltons, and in her new niece discovered many amiable qualities, which made her think Mrs. Elton a very agreeable companion, and George a lucky man.

Mr. Elton, as we have said, was left an orphan at an early age, and in consequence his education was partially neglected, which may account for certain features in his character, that rendered him liable to a charge of inconsistency. His will was always to do what was right, but from a want of self-knowledge and self-command, he was frequently tempted to act contrary to his convictions, and to do wrong. When first he entered holy orders, he resolved to lead a single life; for in an unmarried state he thought he could best devote himself to the service of that holy calling in which he was engaged. This determination he might perhaps have kept, if he had not met Susan Fairfield; but a short acquaintance with her gradually thawed his former re-

solutions; and almost before he was aware of it, he discovered himself engaged to her.

As he had frequently expressed his opinions upon the subject of the marriage of the clergy, and always against it, this act afforded his friends considerable amusement, and subjected him to a charge of dishonesty, which in reality he did not deserve: his inconsistency, however, was so evident, that such conduct could not but render his advice to others less useful for the future, —a great misfortune to any man, but especially so to a clergyman.

Few of us, I fear, are sufficiently impressed with the danger of unreal words. We often speak decisively upon subjects on which we have scarcely reflected; and frequently lay down, as positive rules for the guidance of all, certain things in which, when the hour of trial comes, we ourselves fail. From this it happens that we incur charges of which we are guiltless, but which, had we been silent, we should not have brought upon ourselves. Such was the case in the point before us: had Mr. Elton been less positive in his remarks upon the celibacy of the clergy, which he sometimes declared essentially necessary for all to observe, inferring that every clergyman that did marry was so far a traitor to his sacred office,—had he been less talkative on this head, and merely admitted, what I suppose few who believe the Bible and hear the Church will deny, that celibacy is a higher order than marriage, and that those who can bear it should bear it, no one would have made the ill-natured comments upon his conduct they now did.

Among others that used occasionally a little playful bantering with him on this subject was his aunt Lady Bruton, who having been recommended by him to read Walton's *Life of Hooker*, frequently amused herself by

picturing to him the probable effects of this inconsistency of which he had been guilty, by quoting certain passages from the life of that good and patient man. Some of our readers may perhaps not be so conversant with this delightful piece of biography as Lady Bruton was, and we may therefore be pardoned for quoting a passage which the old lady often read aloud, for the mutual edification and amusement of her nephew and niece.

“ But the justifying of this doctrine did not prove of so bad consequence as the kindness of Mrs. Churchman’s curing him of his late distemper and cold : for that was so gratefully apprehended by Mr. Hooker, that he thought himself bound in conscience to believe all that she said ; so that the good man came to be persuaded by her, that he was a man of a tender constitution : . . . and that it was best for him to have a wife, that might prove a nurse to him ; such a one as might both prolong his life, and make it more comfortable ; and such a one she could and would provide for him, if he thought fit to marry : . . . and he, not considering that the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light, but, like a true Nathanael, fearing no guile, because he meant none, did give her such a power as Eleazer was trusted with, (you may read it in the book of Genesis,) when he was sent to choose a wife for Isaac : for even so he trusted her to choose for him, promising upon a fair summons to return to London, and accept of her choice ; and he did so in that or about the year following. Now the wife provided for him was her daughter Joan, who brought him neither beauty nor portion ; and for her conditions, they were too like that wife’s which is by Solomon compared to a dripping house ; so that the good man had no reason to rejoice in the wife of his youth ; but too just

cause to say with the holy prophet, 'Woe is me that I am constrained to have my habitation in the tents of Kedar.'"

When the old lady came to this passage, she usually took her spectacles off, and gave way to a regular fit of laughing, in which Susan not unfrequently joined ; albeit, as she observed, the picture was to her at least by no means flattering. After this came another passage, which is written in old Isaac's best style of playfulness.

"In this condition he continued about a year ; in which time his two pupils Edwin Sandys and George Cranmer took a journey to see their tutor ; where they found him with a book in his hand (it was the Odes of Horace), he being then, like humble and innocent Abel, tending his small allotment of sheep in a common field ; which he told his pupils he was forced to do then, for that his servant was gone home to dine, and assist his wife to do some necessary household business. But when his servant returned and released him, then his two pupils attended him unto his house, where their best entertainment was his quiet company, which was presently denied them, for Richard was called to rock the cradle ; and the rest of their welcome was so like this, that they stayed but till next morning, which was time enough to discover and pity their tutor's condition."

This picture Mr. Elton admitted was not very inviting ; but as Susan Fairfield was not Joan Churchman, and as he was provided, through God's mercy, with sufficient to enable him to avoid tending sheep under hedges, he hoped that his lot in life would not be exactly as sad as poor Mr. Richard Hooker's. His death, he admitted, was so happy, that he should not care to suffer like troubles, if he could attain to such a state as that good man evinced at his departure.

Our object in these pages is rather with the son of Mr. Elton than with himself; so we shall omit entering very minutely into his ways and doings, and merely say that his pattern for guidance as a parish priest was George Herbert, a married man, as he frequently observed very emphatically to his aunt and others, and who to priests, whether married or unmarried, is a guide in most things that all would do well to follow.

We must also mention, that as the vicar of Hermitage followed the example of the Country Parson, so did Mrs. Elton that of Mr. Herbert's wife, which is so far embodied in his following advice, that we shall here set it down for the consideration of all clergymen's wives; and then conclude our chapter.

"Soon after being made prebend of Layton Ecclesia, in the diocese of Lincoln, he married Jane, daughter of Mr. Charles Danvers, of Bainton, in the county of Wilts. In 1630 Mr. Herbert was inducted into the good, and more pleasant than healthful parsonage of Bemerton, a mile from Salisbury; the third day after which, he said to his wife: 'You are now a minister's wife, and must now so far forget your father's house as not to claim a precedence of any of your parishioners; for you are to know that a priest's wife can challenge no precedence, or place, but that which she purchases by her obliging humility; and I am sure, places so purchased do best become them.' And let me tell you, that I am so good a herald as to assure you that this is truth; and she was so meek a wife, as to assure him it was no vexing news to her, and that he should see her observe it with a willing cheerfulness."

CHAPTER II.

See how mischances suddenly do fall,
And steal upon us.

DRAYTON.

THE fruits of this marriage were a boy and two girls, Ambrose, Ellen, and Mary. In the first instance, it was Mr. Elton's intention to educate his son himself, which, indeed, for many years he did ; and had the satisfaction of feeling that Ambrose fully repaid the pains he took with him. When the boy, however, was fourteen years old, Lady Bruton persuaded his father to send him to a public school, where she offered to defray all expenses. Mr. Elton was a poor man ; and as at the school to which it was proposed to send Ambrose, there were some exhibitions to the University, one of which he hoped he might gain, the offer was scarcely to be refused ; so the matter was settled, and Ambrose sent to Flixby, at that period considered one of the best schools in England. Mr. Elton gave his consent to this arrangement somewhat unwillingly ; and it was with a heavy heart that he saw the time draw near when he and his son were to be separated ; for although Ambrose had many excellent qualities, his father, who had watched his character narrowly, saw in him a want of stability, and a deficiency of strict principle, which made him tremble for his future prospects. Before sending him to Flixby, therefore, he was most anxious to do all in his power to counteract these failings ; and among other things that struck him on this head, was a conviction, that if he placed Ambrose under the care of some older boy, of tried and steady habits, he would, in a great measure, be attaining the end he had in view. At this

time there was, most opportunely, at Flixby, a nephew of Mrs. Elton's, William Sandford, who was not only at the head of the school, but also considered by Dr. Strong, the head-master, one of the steadiest boys he had. With the intention, therefore, of placing Ambrose under his cousin's care, William Sandford was invited to spend a part of the present Christmas holydays at Hermitage; at the end of which the boys were to travel to Flixby together, and if possible the vicar was to accompany them. The invitation was sent and accepted; and in due time a tall good-looking youth, apparently about seventeen years old, of gentlemanly habits and pleasing manners, made his appearance. Mrs. Elton was agreeably surprised with her nephew; for she had imbibed an idea that the Liverpool merchants—such was Mr. Sandford's position—were not the most gentlemanly persons in the world, and fancied that her nephew would turn up something strikingly uncouth and disagreeable. This, as we have said, was not the case; he was really, as Lady Bruton, who was rather particular in these matters, admitted, a very pleasing young man. The vicar, if the truth must be told, was not over-well pleased with his new-found relative. William wore a quantity of chain about his waistcoat, which was generally of a very bright colour; he had also rings on two of his fingers, scented his pocket handkerchief, and in conversation was extremely fond of using the first person singular; all of which had their effect upon Mr. Elton's mind, and made him wish that he could find a worse-dressed boy, albeit of rougher manners, to place his son under. Young Sandford, however, stayed out his visit, and on the appointed day took his departure for Flixby, with Ambrose under his wing. Mr. Elton accompanied them, in order to speak to the head-master upon many matters connected with his

son's disposition ; but as Dr. Strong was from home when they arrived, and the vicar could not stay, he was obliged to state his fears and hopes on paper, which in due time found their way into the Doctor's correspondence-drawer, along with other documents of a similar kind.

Ambrose soon discovered that school was a different place from what he imagined. His cousin had told him so much about the cricket, and foot-ball, and fives, and other amusements of like sort, that he supposed it was to be almost all cricket and foot-ball out of doors, and that much the same extent of amusement would befall him within doors, where, from William's account, he had pictured to himself interminable red-herrings, swig (a beverage well known at all public schools), and other matters of a like kind, which he fancied were the appointed means in hall of relieving the tediousness of wet days in summer and long nights in winter. Under these pleasing impressions he had gone to Flixby with more alacrity than under such circumstances usually takes place. But, alas, his dreams were quickly dissipated.

On the first evening after his arrival, his dear friend and well-beloved cousin, whom he regarded as the most faithful of the former and affectionate of the latter, took an early leave of him, and retired into the head-room, as it was termed ; an apartment appointed to the exclusive use of the upper boys, and into which none of the lower forms were admitted, but such as gained the privilege of the *entrée* by the dignified employment of fagging. Here Sandford remained for the night ; and Ambrose, who had read of the faithlessness of friends, and did not believe it, anxiously expected his return for more than an hour. No cousin, however, came ; and it was only at length, with a great effort of mind, that he could be-

lieve his friend had discovered more pleasant companions than himself, and that he had now to fight his own way alone. With these thoughts he turned his eyes to an examination of the room in which he was, commonly called the hall. It was a low dark-looking room, the roof supported in divers places by thin circular posts, which answered the double purpose of column and pipe, being hollow, and conveying the gas with which the room was lighted. The windows were all firmly guarded with stanchions of iron, and the door ribbed with bars, and bolted, just as he had seen a door in the county prison, when he once accompanied his father to that painful place, and of which this hall somewhat forcibly reminded him. Across the room appeared three long tables, which, from the doses of ink that had been poured upon them, were now as black as that material itself; and from the way in which they were cut and carved, with the initials of those who had formerly sat at their sides, appeared to Ambrose's eye to be stereotyped with mysterious characters, which nothing but planing right through could possibly remove. On one side were small square cupboards newly painted, each with its own number marked upon it; and in one of which, that was open, Ambrose discovered a mixture of articles that would, if duly multiplied, have furnished materials for a general provision-shop,—butter, soap, blacking, tea, sugar, treacle, towel, comb, brushes, and how many other things it is impossible to say,—all packed together in a space of something like three feet by two. At the upper end was the fireplace, around which were sitting at the present time some eight or ten boys, telling each other the different ways in which they had spent the holydays, and comparing the respective sums of money given by their friends for the expenses of the coming half year. This circle attracted the

attention of young Elton for some time ; and from the loud laughter and good-natured noises that proceeded from that quarter, he determined upon postponing to some future occasion his inquiries into other details of the apartment, and go at once to the boys round the fireplace.

“ Well, who are you, my young fellow ?” inquired a great bullheaded-looking boy, as soon as Ambrose approached them.

To this question Ambrose answered by stating the name of himself, his father, and their place of residence. It appeared kind in them, he thought, to take this interest in his affairs, so he entered rather minutely into his family history. With this the boys appeared much amused, and continued the conversation by other inquiries, touching the existence of his grandfather, grandmother, uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters ; whether his father kept a carriage or a wheelbarrow, whether he drank wine or beer, &c. &c. To all these questions he gave straightforward answers, which, although appearing to him to convey nothing at all ludicrous, excited the risible faculties of his companions, who burst out into loud fits of laughter as he replied to their respective queries. At length, when they had extracted as much from their new acquaintance as they thought desirable, and Ambrose was beginning to question whether they were not laughing *at* him, and not *with* him—a wide difference, by the way—the fat bull-headed youth aforesaid walked up to him on the right-hand side, and jerking him under the chin, in an instant Ambrose was precipitated backwards over the body of another boy, who had gone round for that purpose. In a minute after, his tormentors disappeared ; and somewhat overpowered at this rough salutation from his schoolfellows, he returned to his seat. Here he remained during the

evening, casting many a wishful look to the room where his cousin was, and ruminating upon the pleasures of the dear home he had left, the misery of his present situation, and the uncertainty of friendship.

William Sandford did not appear before bed-time, whither Ambrose went with a heavy heart as soon as the sleeping apartments were opened. In the room to which he was shewn, as his future dormitory, were some twelve or fourteen other beds, all of the same size and of the same cold blue-and-white chequered hue. This rather surprised him, and formed in his mind no pleasing contrast with his own little room and the dimity bed at Hermitage. He was determined, however, to make the best of the matter he could, and accordingly said his prayers, undressed himself, and got into bed before the other boys came up stairs. When there, the thoughts of his lonely position, and the remembrance of his father, mother, and sisters, came so forcibly upon him, that all his resolutions to keep up his spirits failed, and burying his head in the pillow, he gave way to a violent fit of weeping. How long his tears flowed he knew not, nor precisely the time when he fell asleep; but he was now dreaming of those things that had exercised his last waking thoughts—the happy home and the kind friends he had left, when he was aroused by a loud noise of indescribable and horrible sounds, as of wild beasts bellowing, bleating, barking, and roaring; and in a moment afterwards discovered himself, in school-phrase, turned topsy-turvy, his feet high exalted in the air, and his head as nearly under his arms as it could well go without breaking his neck.

CHAPTER III.

O England, full of sin, but most of sloth !
Spit out thy phlegm, and fill thy breast with glory.
Thy gentry bleats, as if thy native cloth
Transfus'd a sheepishness into thy story.
Not that they all are so ; but that the most
Are gone to grass, and in the pasture lost.

This loss springs chiefly from our education.
Some till their ground, but let weeds choke their son :
Some mark a partridge, never their child's fashion :
Some skip them over, and the thing is done.
Study this art ; make it thy great design ;
And, if God's image move thee not, let thine.

Some great estates provide, but do not breed
A mast'ring mind ; so both are lost thereby.
Or else they breed them tender ; make them need
All that they leave—this is flat poverty.
For he that needs five thousand pounds to live
Is full as poor as he that needs but five.

HERBERT.

A FEW days sufficed to reconcile Ambrose to his new situation ; and under the able guidance of some of his schoolfellows, he bid fair to become tolerably conversant with the ways and habits of the place. William Sandford he seldom saw, as his amusements and walks were generally taken with the boys of his own age and standing ; and when in hall, his cousin went always to the privileged head-room, into which he was never allowed to enter. Ambrose was a clever lad, and having been well grounded by his father, soon found himself able, by application, to keep at the head of his class. His good nature, moreover, assisted him somewhat in this ; for when any of the idle boys were hard-up, as they termed

it, for a copy of verses or a theme, Elton was the one to whom they applied, and seldom without success.

All this was very satisfactory, as far as it went; but unfortunately at Flixby progress in scholarship was considered the end of education; and although Ambrose was daily becoming a better scholar, he was in reality becoming worse educated; for instead of gaining a knowledge of himself and of God, and acquiring habits of self-command and virtue, and laying up a good foundation against the time to come, he was learning mere wisdom of this world, giving way to evil habits, which he would one day or other have to overcome, and gradually falling away from the path of strict integrity in which his father had taught him to walk. It would take us too long to enumerate the different ways in which this neglect of religious education was observable at Flixby: thus much we may say, the boys were never privately instructed in their religious duties, and the precepts they heard in chapel on the week-days, or in the church on the Sundays, from the lessons and sermon, were almost entirely lost from the careless way in which the services were attended. As to reverence for God's house, there was none: on the week-days during service, one boy would be cramming, in school-phrase, Homer or Virgil for his morning repetition; another would be trying the virtue of a new pen-knife upon the bench just before him, on which he would leave in large capitals the two or three letters which stood at the head respectively of his christian and surname; a third would be exercising his pencil on the covers of his book, and by the gratuitous exhibition of caricatures, relieve the weariness of his friends as well as himself, and thus take away, as the boys irreverently termed it, the monotony of the performance. On Sundays matters were no better in church; much the same sort of thing

went on, although perhaps the boys were somewhat more cautious. At first Ambrose felt much surprise at this ; for his father had always inculcated upon him the necessity of reverencing God's house, and at Hermitage the very youngest of the charity-school children would have been ashamed to have done such things.

Custom, however, reconciles us to almost any thing. Dr. Strong took no notice of this irreverence, unless the boys made so great a noise as to oblige him to do so. Mr. Peers and the other masters took no notice of it ; and so Ambrose thought that as it was no business of theirs, it could be no business of his ; and if they did not think it mattered much, why should he ?

The other religious instruction at Flixby amounted to this :—once a month, on what was technically called Watts's Sunday, the boys in the upper classes had to answer to some twelve or fourteen pages of "Watts's Questions ;" a brief way of teaching the young religious duties and Church-principles, through the instrumentality of the memory, assisted by the traditions of a Dissenter.

Dr. Strong entertained some rather singular ideas upon the subject of alms-giving, which also had their effect upon the boys. We will take an instance in which this was apparent. Once in the half-year, or oftener as the case might happen, there was a charity-sermon at the Church, at which all the various devices commonly used on these occasions were of course put into full requisition. At such times, the Doctor thought it right that the school should take its share in the proceedings ; and as the boys were too impervious to oratory to be excited to alms-deeds by the skill of the preacher, and too fond of nuts and gingerbread to be trusted with their own money, the process of charity in this respect was performed by proxy. On these occasions, when the plate

came to the spot where the school was arranged, the head-master came forward, and in behalf of the boys emptied his apron full of sixpences and shillings into the expectant boxes; and the sum total was added to the half-year's bill, at the rate of sixpence or one shilling per head, according to the age of the patient. A mode of collecting and distributing alms somewhat analogous to that practised under the present poor-law.

I feel sure that some of my readers at least will not express surprise, that under such training as this, Ambrose Elton, who, we must remember, was only fourteen years old, should have made a retrograde progress in religious education. In this declension Jack Tickill, a Liverpool boy, of about his own age, greatly assisted. Jack was one of those boys who, ever in mischief themselves, and inducing others to perpetrate the same, contrive by some unaccountable means to avoid punishment, and to retain to a certain degree the good opinion of their tutors. It was from this circumstance that Dr. Strong, in answer to a letter of Mr. Elton's upon the subject of Ambrose's acquaintances, informed him that in Tickill he possessed the friendship of one of his most promising scholars, a boy that was likely to make some figure in the world, and who uniformly conducted himself with propriety and decorum. In consequence of this commendation, Tickill was invited to spend a portion of the coming holydays at Hermitage; an invitation which was gladly accepted, but which was unavoidably put off by the following unforeseen occurrence.

During the spring, Mrs. Elton's health, which for some time had been in a very unsatisfactory state, became so much worse, that the medical attendant told her husband change of air was positively necessary, and that a long sojourn on the Continent was the only thing likely to effect a permanent benefit. Under these cir-

cumstances, the vicar felt he had no alternative: accordingly, having provided a fit substitute for the duties at Hermitage, and taking his two daughters with him, he set off on his travels. Some few days before his departure, he ran up to Flixby to bid Ambrose farewell. He found him very much improved in appearance, and evidently much better informed on most subjects than he had been before he went to school; but there was a degree of carelessness and irreverence in his manner of speaking and tone of thought, which raised suspicion and anxiety in his father's mind. He could not, however, detect any thing positively wrong; so having given him all the advice he thought necessary, with his blessing, he returned home. At this visit it was arranged that Ambrose should pass the midsummer holydays with his cousin and young Tickill at Liverpool, dividing his time between them; and that he was to go to his aunt, Lady Bruton, at Christmas.

CHAPTER IV.

Sacred Religion, mother of form and fear!

Scarcely men can spare
The necessary rites to set thee out.

DANIEL.

AMBROSE had never resided in a large town, and was therefore much astonished with all he observed on his arrival at Liverpool. Mr. Tickill, his friend's father, was a large foreign merchant; and being a wealthy man, and fond of the sea, had, among his other sources of gratification, a small yacht, in which he was accustomed to take short trips to Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Scotch

or Welsh coasts. In these expeditions he was always accompanied by a few friends; and a portion of the midsummer holydays was commonly set apart for a longer sail than usual, that Jack and any of his school-fellows whom he liked to invite might accompany him. This expedition had been much talked of by Ambrose and his friend; and as he was invited to make one in the yacht-excursion, it was with no slight degree of satisfaction that he heard they were to sail the week after their arrival. The days that intervened passed away very quickly; during the morning the two boys were commonly engaged in lionising all that was worth seeing—the custom-house, exchange, the docks, all came in for their share; and when nothing else was to be done, they took a sail in one of the numberless steamers that are perpetually plying across the river, visiting in turn all that was interesting; the evenings were generally employed in concerts, juvenile balls, parties, &c., all of which, in their way, Ambrose thought very good fun. One day was set apart for an excursion to Chester, the city of the diocese, of which we must speak more fully. In this expedition Mrs. Tickill and her daughter promised to join. On the day appointed, the carriage was accordingly ordered early; and after a pleasant sail up the river to Eastham ferry, they disembarked and proceeded at once on their way. Ambrose was delighted with the drive; and on arriving at Chester, not less delighted with that city. It is an ancient town surrounded with walls, among the most perfect in the kingdom, full of old-fashioned black and white houses with galleries, or rows as they are called; some remains of religious establishments, several churches, among and above which towers the venerable cathedral; besides these, there is a castle, part of which is said to have been built before the Conquest, and the other part

of recent date, now used as a barrack ; a modern infirmary of very red brick, just the place which you could fancy full of sick people ; and many other things too numerous to mention, but all well worthy of observation.

As soon as they had left the carriage, Ambrose proposed they should go first of all to the cathedral, which was agreed to by the others. With this he declared himself disappointed : it was not what he expected to find ; he had never seen a cathedral before, but knowing that it was the mother church of the diocese, he thought that at least in *it* he should observe none of that appearance of poverty so striking in many of our parish churches. The exterior was patched up in places with brick-work instead of stone ; there was a long red chimney peeping out here and there ; the windows were ill repaired ; and the cloisters bore most signal marks of past destruction and present neglect.

" I wonder," said he, addressing Mrs. Tickill, " some of the rich Liverpool people do not send their money here, and get this cathedral properly repaired ; I am sure that persons who have such splendid mansions and live so luxuriously might spare something for the house of God,—a cathedral, if I understand right, has a claim upon the purse of every one within the diocese."

Mrs. Tickill felt the rebuke, although she was aware Ambrose had not levelled his remarks against her ; she could not but admit that the cathedral ought to be restored to the state in which our pious forefathers left it, and that every one who had the power should contribute to so proper an object.

Having examined the outside of the building, they entered the nave, which is very beautiful, and less mutilated with modern heathenish monuments than most cathedrals. After remaining here some time, they passed on to the choir, which was as much deformed as it well

could be,—lots of boxes, as Jack called them, on the ground floor, with a pigeon-cote or two above. The Bishop's throne, too, he thought a most ungainly lump of wood, utterly unecclesiastical in form and appearance. But the worst part of all, perhaps, was the sad lot that had befallen one of the transepts, which was pewed and pulpited in modern fashion; and looked as unlike a part of a cathedral as St. Paul's does once a year, when it is benched and backed up to the top for the accommodation of the *rich* public, who are invited, on a certain anniversary, to *see* a very interesting sight, and to *give money*.

On leaving the cathedral, Ambrose observed Mrs. Tickill give the verger a half-crown; and taking a boy's liberty, he asked her why she did it. She told him that it was customary to pay the men that shewed such places. He was surprised at this,—as well indeed he might be,—and observed, that his father had two boxes close to the door of the church at Hermitage, on one of which was written, "For the poor;" on the other, "For the church," into one of which he always asked his friends to put what they felt disposed to give. From the cathedral they went to St. John's church, which appeared to Ambrose to be in a worse state than the building they had left.

"Such windows!" exclaimed Jack, as soon as they came in sight of it,—who, with his other abilities, had a keen sense of the ridiculous, so far, at least, as to see the monstrous absurdities that had been perpetrated on this once magnificent building,—“What windows! and more of that precious brick-work! Well, I must say that the good folks here might make some improvement in their churches.”

"What is that?" said Ambrose to the man, as they entered the church.

“ The pulpit, sir,” was the answer.

Ambrose said nothing ; for a half-year at Flixby had not altogether removed the reverence he had been taught to shew in the house of God ; but he could not avoid the thought, that if that really was the pulpit, it was the most extraordinary one he had ever seen.

Jack observed what was passing in his friend's thoughts ; and as soon as they got into the churchyard, commenced his remarks upon it, which, sooth to say, were of a somewhat ludicrous cast. The leading idea in his mind appeared to be, that it would be capital fun to let down the extinguisher, as he called the sounding-board, some day upon the head of the preacher, and so, as he said, box him up.

From St. John's they went round the walls, which are very perfect and kept in good repair ; from them to the castle, which they all thought very handsome ; and then to St. Mary's, Ambrose being determined to see as many of the churches as he could. Here Jack even was unable to find much cause of complaint. The roof was very beautiful, as also were some of the windows. The vestry certainly, he remarked, was rather curious,—but so vestries often were ; and there was a quaint gallery, he said, on the north side ; but as things commonly were, he was satisfied. After this the party returned home, all much pleased with their expedition.

On the following morning, at an early hour, Mr. Tickill, with his son and Ambrose, went on board the *Ariel*,—such was the name of the yacht ; and soon after, hoisting sail, with a favourable breeze, dropped down the river. Henry Herbert, a friend of Mr. Tickill's, had been invited to join the party, and was already on board when they arrived. He was a man of middle age, quiet and almost reserved in manner, and, to

Ambrose, appeared something like his father; very different from the persons he had met during his visit at Liverpool. Their first day's sail was to be to Bangor, a well-known cathedral-town on that coast, where they intended to remain a few days, and then on to Carnarvon, from which place they were either to cross over to the Irish coast, or to sail up to the Isle of Man; after which, Mr. Tickill said, he should be obliged to return home. With this arrangement Ambrose was highly delighted; having never seen a mountainous country, and having heard so much of Wales, with its lakes and mountains and beautiful scenery, he was very well satisfied at the prospect before him.

The day was beautiful, and nothing occurred to damp the pleasure of the party. Mr. Herbert appeared to be well acquainted with the coast along which they passed, and pointed out to them every thing worthy of attention as it occurred. Here was a sea-bathing place, in which people congregated during the summer months, some for health, some for amusement, some for profit; a little beyond it was a small town where slates were exported from the neighbouring mountains; again, farther on, was a large mansion, recently built, which extended, with its offices, a great distance along the mountain side.

"The owner of that place," remarked Herbert, "has spent many thousand pounds in building his palace, for such it may almost be called. The money with which he has built it comes from a large manufacturing town, where this gentleman has considerable property."

"I hope," said Ambrose, "that he either gives much there, or spends some of it among the inhabitants; for I don't think it right to bring it all away—do you?"

"Certainly not," replied Herbert. "The conduct of those men,—and there are many such,—who derive

their income from large impoverished towns, and perhaps do nothing more for the people there than subscribe a few paltry pounds to one or two public charitable institutions, is very bad ; but, indeed, how little do the rich men in this country know the responsibility of wealth ! A day will come when all the *rich*, as well as the poor, must give in an account of their stewardship ; and what answer can those give who have squandered upon themselves and upon their enjoyments sums that would have fed thousands, and afforded them—that which is of far higher value than the bread that perisheth—priests and churches, of which, through the covetousness and extravagance of the rich, the poor are well nigh deprived ? Under any circumstances, a rich man is bound to use the mammon of unrighteousness committed to him with very great caution ; how much more so, when the worldly wealth of which he is possessed comes from places where the poor are perishing for lack of food, spiritual and bodily !”

Beyond this, at a distance of a few miles, they passed an ancient castle, full of historical recollections, several of which Herbert, who was well read in antiquarian lore, related to the party, and with which they were so well pleased, that the time passed away very swiftly ; and before they expected it, they found themselves within sight of Bangor. Here, soon after their arrival, they disembarked, and leaving the vessel in the care of the sailors, went up to the inn, where they proposed spending the night, as more agreeable than the closely confined berths on board the yacht.

On the following morning, at an early hour, Mr. Tickill, with his son, went out to pay some visits in the town ; and Herbert proposed to Ambrose that they should go to the cathedral, where he hoped to derive a treat from the ecclesiastical architecture, as well as enjoy

the privilege of public prayer, which he was daily in the habit of attending.

On arriving at the cathedral, they were greatly disappointed to find the doors shut; and, on inquiry, learnt that, being Thursday, there was no divine service. "The days for prayer," said the man who came up with the keys in his hand, "are Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, in the evening." Mr. Herbert said nothing, but reverently entering the building, was much grieved at what he saw. The nave was fitted up as the south transept at Chester, with pews, &c., for the purpose of Welsh service. They were too poor at Bangor, the man said, to build another church. The choir also was entirely pewed up to the very altar, and almost all traces of a cathedral character gone, except the stalls and bishop's throne. The windows generally were poor, and the walls filled with cold-looking marble tablets. A further investigation on the outside did not tend to dissipate the sad feelings that oppressed him: it was repaired here and there with roman cement; and altogether told in plain terms, that the Welsh people in that neighbourhood were either very poor or very selfish: for their cathedral, although perfectly clean and tidy, was by no means in such a state as a cathedral ought to be.

'Tis sad, Herbert thought within himself, as he stood in the churchyard contemplating the venerable building before him, that an edifice like this should be in the state in which it is; so different, alas, from that in which our pious forefathers left it. What would they think, he continued in his musings, if one of them could rise from his lowly bed of earth, and see what I see, and hear what I hear,—service three days in the week, and the holy Eucharist once a month! Where is all this to end? Will the time come—it may—when

a government, acting upon utilitarian principles, shall think fit to take away this see from her mountainous children, and remove it to Manchester, or some other manufacturing district, where the population is denser, and where the men of this world, acting on worldly-wise principles, may deem it likely to prove more useful? There are sounds about us which lead one to fear such a thing; and should it come, what plea can be offered to stay the sacrilegious act, by those who have neglected to fulfil their founder's intentions; and more fearful still, how can they expect the aid of the Church's God in the day of their need, who, in the day of their prosperity, have disobeyed the Church's laws?

Ambrose, who had observed his companion's thoughtful countenance, and now and then caught a few words of what he said, here interrupted Herbert's musings, by saying he thought it very strange that many small parish churches, such as Hermitage for instance, should have more services than some of the cathedrals. "My father," he continued, "has service twice every day, and says that all clergymen ought to have the same; and yet here, in a cathedral, they have not; how is this?"

Herbert said that he could not very easily answer his question. It was a painful subject to speak upon; "but this much," he added, "may satisfy you, that your father is perfectly right. The Church of England orders a daily service."

On their return to the inn they found Mr. Tickill and his son, who had just come in, and now proposed that they should go and see the lions of the place. This agreed upon, they started in the direction of the castle, a modern building of great magnificence, with the architecture and decorations of which they were much pleased.

Herbert said it was certainly a very splendid place,

and, as far as the castle-style of building could be adapted to modern living, it had been done here; although on the whole, for private residences, he preferred the Elizabethan.

From the castle they went to the beach, and took a boat, intending to sail down the river as far as the bridge. In this, however, they were disappointed, as in consequence of a strong wind blowing against them, they were obliged, after two hours' beating about, to return. During the sail, Herbert was very silent, and apparently sad. Mr. Tickill asked him what was the matter with him. Herbert smiled, and replied, that he could not always control his feelings, so far as to prevent others from observing them. "You will perhaps," he added, "almost be inclined to laugh at me when I tell you the cause of my present gloominess, for such you will probably call it." He then narrated the whole of what he had seen and heard at the cathedral, interspersing his account with sundry remarks, with few of which, I ought to say, his listener agreed. He then mentioned the magnificence they had seen at the castle, which is said to have cost nearly half a million of money; and then pointing to the comfortable-looking houses on each side of the river, with their well-rigged yachts lying at anchor in front of them, asked his friend, whether, after all he had said, he did not think there was reason for sadness in any reflecting man's mind.

Mr. Tickill admitted that it certainly was not right to spend all upon one's own house, and none upon the church; but still, he said, he could not look upon the matter in the serious light in which his friend did.

Herbert replied, that if Holy Scripture was to be depended upon, "I speak reverently," he added, "there is indeed great cause for fear. Call to mind, for example,

the words of the prophet when speaking on this very subject; 'Is it time for you to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?' and let us earnestly reflect on what follows, as a prospect of the fate of our nation, if we act in this respect as the Jews did. 'Ye looked for much, and lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of Hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.' Men," he added solemnly, "ought not to build themselves palaces, and live in luxury and indulgence, while the churches of God throughout the land are deprived of their ancient beauty for want of funds to restore them, and in many instances are like barns."

CHAPTER V.

I do love these ancient ruins :
We never tread upon them, but we set
Our foot upon some reverend history.

WEBSTER.

ON the following day Mr. Tickill proposed that they should embark again, and sail down to Carnarvon. With this plan they all agreed; and as soon as breakfast was finished, the party went on board, and were soon in full sail towards Carnarvon. On this occasion Mr. Herbert again resumed his office of pointing out the places as they passed them. He had several times sailed along the coast, although he had never before gone on shore in the neighbourhood.

"Those pretty places," he said, in answer to a question of Ambrose's, looking at some beautiful cottages ornées, in front of which they were passing, "I under-

stand belong to some Manchester tradesmen, who come down here during the summer months, and enjoy themselves either in sailing about the river in these well-built little yachts, or in driving about amid the beautiful scenery."

"How much nicer," answered Ambrose, "to do this, than to live in that smoky place, Manchester! I never saw such a dirty hole in my life."

"Yes," replied Mr. Herbert, "perhaps it *is* nicer to spend the summer months away from Manchester as these gentlemen do, or to retire altogether from business, as I understand many of them do, and come to live here amid all these charms of nature; but still, I cannot quite reconcile myself to the idea. It certainly appears to me that a man engaged in trade is scarcely at liberty to choose his residence where he pleases; or that one who has made his fortune in Manchester, can, with propriety, wash his hands entirely of the place, and come and settle here."

"Why not?" asked Mr. Tickill. "I really can see no reason why he should not. When a man has toiled hard for his money, I think he has a fair right to spend it where and how he likes. Come, let us have your reasons," he added, addressing Herbert.

"I don't speak positively," rejoined the latter; "and possibly I may have taken too strong a view of the case; but I fancy that I see very many evils in this plan of tradesmen leaving the scene of their trade as often as they can while they are getting their money, and altogether when their fortune is made. Has it not a tendency to make the workmen discontented? to draw still wider than it already is drawn the separation between master and man? You would think it a very dreadful thing for a clergyman to accept a valuable living—I mean," he added, "valuable in a pecuniary sense

—in a manufacturing district, and then absent himself from it as much as possible because of its disagreeableness, and put a curate in to do all the duty, while he was enjoying himself in such a spot as this. I grant you," he added, "that the clergyman's sin in such a case would be far greater than the layman's; but I conceive the nature of the sin would be somewhat the same,—both would be deserting the sphere in which they were placed, and both would be neglecting their duty. When a workman sees his master leave the place where his trade is carrying on, as soon as he can, he naturally thinks that his only interest in the place is a pecuniary one; and that he merely comes to look after the money-part of the business. In such a case, the manufacturer has no time to attend, as he should do, to the state of his men; to inquire into their moral conduct, and to shew other little marks of kindness and interest in their affairs, which have so strong a tendency to bind together the rich and the poor. All this is lost.

"Again, as to manufacturers and other tradesmen leaving altogether the places in which their fortunes have been made; it surely can not be right for a man to collect a vast number of poor together, and then to withdraw his capital from a concern which he sells to some man of straw, who, if trade goes well, makes another fortune; but if ill, becomes bankrupt, and leaves his workmen to pick up a subsistence as they best may,—some from the voluntary alms of the charitable, and some from the tender mercies of the poor-law. When a man has made his fortune out of the sweat of the brow of the poor, the men through whose instrumentality his fortune has been made, have, I conceive, a claim on him for relief in need, if, through a depression in trade, or any other cause except their own fault, they are reduced to distress. Country gen-

tle men in many instances—" (Mr. Tickill smiled)—" I wish I could say in all," added Herbert, " but some, at least, think it necessary to provide for the wants of their superannuated servants, without subjecting them to the miseries of a workhouse. Ought not, I ask, manufacturers to do the same?"

" Perhaps they ought to do so," replied Mr. Tickill; " but there is so much in what you have said, that requires deep reflection, that I must decline giving you a further answer just at present. However, you must not confine all your blame to the manufacturers; consider, for instance, the case of many noblemen and country gentlemen who live beyond their income, and drain from their estates every farthing they can collect to satisfy their expensive and luxurious habits. In many instances they have three or four places in different parts of the country, all of which come in for the same treatment, and their tenants never see them from one year's end to the other.—You have spoken pretty severely of the manufacturers; cannot you give us a few hints upon the evils among the agriculturists? What do you think of men deriving large revenues from an estate which they never visit; who never spend a shilling in contributing to local charities, or relieving the necessities of the poor?"

" I think that all this is very bad indeed," replied Herbert.

" I agree with you," said Mr. Tickill; " I call it quite as bad as the conduct of these manufacturers that you so often drive at. I can tell you the case of a friend of mine, a clergyman, who has the ill fortune to have one of these non-residents for his squire. He owns almost every acre in the parish, seldom puts his head in it, and never gives away there one farthing from the beginning of the year to the end."

"It is sad," replied Mr. Herbert; "but such evils can no more be entirely remedied in the country, than the evils in the towns of which I so frequently complain."

"What," asked Mr. Tickill, with a smile, "will not your panacea remedy these things?"

"The full carrying out of the Church's intentions would do much," replied Herbert, "even in these things; but there will always be tares among the wheat till the harvest; always some men who will despise all teaching, and, in spite of every thing, do wrong.—But here we are at Carnarvon. What a magnificent ruin the castle is!" he continued, looking at it through the glass he held in his hand, as it now became plainer, and was seen far above the other buildings of the town. "Our forefathers certainly had a better notion of propriety in these matters than we have. They were really utilitarians in the right sense of the word—we in the wrong. What they did had no sham in it. Their buildings at once shewed the purpose for which they were built. A church was a church, a house a house, and a castle a castle. Who could mistake the purpose for which this building before us was intended? But now we make houses in the shape of castles, with plaster-of-Paris walls, French windows, and Venetian blinds; and our churches far more like theatres, places for seeing and hearing, than for praying and partaking of sublime mysteries.—But I've said enough."

In a short time, the sails were furled, the anchor down, and the party comfortably settled at the Lion hotel, where they were to remain a few days, during which the mountains, and other beautiful scenery in that part of Wales, were to be visited. In the evening, they sauntered into the town, and were much delighted with the castle, which Mr. Herbert pronounced to be

one of the finest ruins of the kind he had ever seen. After looking over this, they walked up the hill to the parish church, where they heard there were some fine monuments; these they carefully inspected, and were glad to find that they were less injured by puritans and time than such memorials of our forefathers commonly are. Some of the monuments were whitewashed over, which Mr. Tickill thought a great mark of the cleanliness of the Welsh people. The pews, also, were most comfortably lined, and some of them padded, which he said was an evidence that the Welsh were not as boorish and ignorant of modern improvements as some persons said they were. On leaving the churchyard, he remarked to Mr. Herbert, that it was well for his argument yesterday that he had not seen this church, as it most completely refuted the positions he laid down: "Whatever may be the case elsewhere, here at least the people are careful of their churches, and the wardens attentive to their duty; for, as you see, they have whitewashed the church without as well as within."

CHAPTER VI.

In some gay hour Vice steals into the breast;
Perchance she wears some softer Virtue's vest:
By unperceived degrees she tempts to stray,
Till far from Virtue's path she leads the feet away.

COLERIDGE.

THERE was so much to be seen in the neighbourhood of Carnarvon, that the time fixed upon for their stay passed away long before they had visited half the places they intended. One morning they were planning an

excursion for the day, when a letter arrived for Mr. Tickill, the contents of which were such as to oblige him to return to Liverpool directly. "We must therefore content ourselves for the present," he said, "with what we have already seen, and pack up our traps for home." This was accordingly done; and, as the wind was fair, they were soon on board the Ariel, and, with full sails, on their way home. The day passed off without any occurrence of moment; and at night Mrs. Tickill had the pleasure of seeing her husband and son, with their friends, again comfortably housed.

Ambrose remained with the Tickills two days after their return, and then went, for the rest of the holidays, to his cousin William Sandford. Here the time passed away in an uninterrupted course of enjoyment. The Sandfords were very rich, and having no other child, William was allowed what money he pleased; and, sooth to say, he took pretty good care to spend as much as a boy of seventeen years old could well manage to do. In all his amusements Ambrose was his companion; and during the few weeks that elapsed before the holidays were over, contracted a relish for pleasure and expense that bid fair to prove a serious injury to him in future life. Mr. Herbert occasionally met him; but as he was always with his cousin, could not say much; and the words of quiet wisdom, which he now and then dropped into his ear, were soon taken away by William Sandford, who told him that Herbert was a stupid, slow sort of fellow, and wondered where he had picked up such a companion. Ambrose was keenly susceptible of ridicule, so suffered William to carry his point; and by degrees dropped all intimacy with his former friend.

The end of the holidays came sooner than Ambrose expected, or wished. It was, therefore, with no slight

satisfaction, that he saw Mrs. Sandford sit down, on the last day but two before that fixed for his return to Flixby, to write to Dr. Strong, requesting him to allow her nephew an extra week's holyday. "I don't know exactly what excuse to make," she said, looking up at her son, with the pen in her hand, and nibbling away at the top of it, as though she expected to find a thought or two there. "What shall I say, William?"

"Oh, say," returned her son, "what you have often said for me,—say he is ill."

"But I am not ill," observed Ambrose; "I was never better in my life."

"No," answered his cousin, "you are not ill—any body can see that; but still you can easily say that you are."

"But that would be a lie," said Ambrose.

"Not exactly a lie," said William.

"Don't you think," asked Ambrose, turning to his aunt, "that the best plan will be, to tell the Doctor the truth; and say that the regatta, and races, and cricket-match, are all coming on this week, and that you wish me to stay and see them?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" exclaimed William, "a nice fellow you are to manage such a matter! a very likely thing indeed, that old Strong will let you stop away for races and cricket-matches; you had better write and ask him at once to let you go to the bull-bait, which takes place during the week. Why, Ambrose, you are as green as you were when you first went to Flixby; when you got well flogged for not giving up the name of the fellow that thrashed you in the school-room. Come, hold your tongue, and we will settle it for you."

"I think," observed Mrs. Sandford to her son, who was looking over her note to see what she had written, "I think we had better not say he is ill."

"Perhaps not," replied William; "the old boy will say the Liverpool air is singularly ill-suited to the constitutions of our family."

"Suppose I write in general terms, that we wish him to stay?"

"No," said her son, "that won't do; he never takes general excuses; we must nail him down on one point.—I have it:—say that you have relations coming next week who have never seen your nephew, and with whom you are most anxious to make him acquainted; this is true too, so you can say it with a safe conscience. It is rather a lame excuse, to be sure," he added; "but I think it will do; and you can add how much you are pleased with your nephew's progress in his studies, his general conduct, &c. Touch him up in that quarter; he is very fond of hearing of his pupils' progress."

Ambrose listened to the above conversation, which he did not like. It appeared to him that this excuse was dishonest. He felt that he was staying for the races, not for his relations, and was on the point of saying so, when he caught his cousin's eye, and was silent. The note was despatched; and a civil answer in due time returned. The races, regatta, and cricket-match passed off as well as these affairs generally do,—a horse or two killed, some few men ruined, three men ducked in a horse-pond for pocket-picking, and some small boats run down at the regatta, &c. &c. &c.

With all, Ambrose was highly delighted. His cousin was well known to many of the sporting men that frequented this part of the world; and having always plenty of money at command, was tolerated by some, and cultivated by others, as a rising young man in this department of life. Through his influence, Ambrose was introduced to many "top-sawyers," as William called

them; and from the kind way in which they treated him, began to think he was far too old for a schoolboy, and that it was high time for him to burst the Doctor's bonds, and commence at once on the active pleasures and duties of life. In this impression he was borne out by his cousin, who was not to return again to Flixby, and who took occasion, at sundry times, to impress his present importance upon Ambrose, by sneers at the school from which he had but now escaped.

"Flixby," he said, "was a capital place for *boys*, and old Strong a clever sort of a fellow, and a tolerable good master; but when fellows became men, why then the sooner they left such places the better."

With this Ambrose agreed, and thought that a fellow became a man just at his age—fifteen; and that half a year at such a place was quite sufficient to finish his education.

These visions, albeit very agreeable, were all dissipated one evening, by Ambrose finding himself, after a long day's journey, in the very hall under Dr. Strong's roof in which he had been placed some eight months before. The morning after his arrival, the Doctor sent for him into his library, and asking him some questions relative to the way in which he had spent the holydays, delivered into his hand a letter from Mr. Elton, which had been sent under cover to him some few days previously. Ambrose had not heard from his father for some time, and was therefore very glad to receive the letter, which having opened, he read as follows:

"My dearest son,—I should have answered your last letter earlier; but having been a short excursion up the country, have had so much to see, and otherwise to attend to, that from necessity my writing-materials have been for some days almost entirely laid aside.

You will be glad to hear that your mother's health is very materially improved, and should it please God to continue this amendment, I entertain hopes that we shall return to Hermitage next summer. But what may happen in a year, who shall tell? I have so much to write to you, on important subjects, that I must leave to your mother's or sister's pen a full account of all our doings and seeings of late. This you will not regret, as women's pens in these matters are far more ready than ours. Dr. Strong writes me word that you have conducted yourself well during the half-year; that your progress in learning has been satisfactory; and your moral conduct good. All this is well; and I sincerely trust that the Doctor's opinion of you is correct. As to your progress in learning, I am naturally very anxious; my earnest wish is, that you should follow your father's steps, and in due time enter the priesthood, for a due discharge of the duties of which, I consider learning in most instances almost essential. I therefore sincerely hope that you are acquiring a thorough knowledge of the construction and nature of the learned languages, and are laying in a stock of historical and other information, that will prove of service to you as long as you live. Your Bible you of course study, and I hope are becoming conversant, not only with the meaning of the text, but of all things connected with it. But, much as I wish to see you a scholar, I am far more anxious to see you grow up a pious Christian; and on this ground I do especially hope that during the past half-year you have been making progress in goodness. You have doubtlessly met with many temptations at Flixby, of which you had before no idea. I trust the consideration of this has sent you more frequently to your knees, and that by seeking, through our blessed Saviour, the aid of God's Holy

Spirit, you have been enabled to withstand the temptations wherewith you have been assailed.

“My last request on this head has not I hope been forgotten ; that besides the daily prayers in your chapel, you would retire to your room at least twice in the day, morning and evening, to pray. The importance of a religious boyhood, as a preparation for a godly manhood and a happy death, I have so frequently pressed upon you at other times, that I will not recur to it here. As you love me, Ambrose, think often upon it.

“In this matter of religion, I cannot urge too strongly upon your notice the necessity of using the greatest caution with regard to your companions. ‘The spirit with you is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ You are one of those who in a kindly atmosphere, among religious persons, will go well ; but under different circumstances, from the easiness of your disposition, the anxiety to oblige others, and a love of praise, you will be very apt to be led astray. Let me, therefore, entreat you, never to associate with a wicked boy. I shall like very much to hear from you soon, with a long account of the way in which your holydays have been passed ; the new books you are reading this half-year, and your present intimate companions. Give my compliments to Dr. Strong and Mr. Peers. And, with your mother and sisters’ kindest love,

“ Believe me to be

“ Your truly attached father,

“ GEORGE ELTON.”

As soon as Ambrose had read his father’s letter, he retired to a part of the hall where he thought he should not be observed ; and taking it up again, he read it through a second time. His conscience told him that he had not been acting as his father wished him to do.

All that had passed since he last parted with him came over his mind ; and burying his face in his hands, he gave way to a passionate feeling of grief.

CHAPTER VII.

What man so wise, what earthly witt so ware,
As to descry the crafty cunning traine
By which Deceit doth maske in visour faire,
And cast her contours died deepe in graine,
To seeme like Truth, whose shape she well can faine ?

SPENSER.

For some weeks after the arrival of this letter, Ambrose was observed to be very thoughtful, and to take little interest in his former amusements or companions. His father had touched upon one or two points that concerned him deeply ; and after reflection he was aware that he had been negligent of the advice he had received. In consequence of this, among other good resolutions he formed, was that of avoiding as much as possible his former companions, who he knew were such as his father would not approve of. Such resolutions, however, although easy to form, are somewhat difficult to put into execution ; and so in the end Ambrose discovered. For a few days, indeed, he kept his determination steadily ; he lived for the most part alone, studied by himself, and took solitary walks.

But this he found to be dull work, and thereupon made one or two attempts to get up an acquaintance with some of the steadier boys ; in this he failed, for his previous conduct made them shy of him, and so at length he was obliged to give in ; and by degrees fell back into his old set, who on their part were glad to recover so jolly a companion. On resuming his former

associates, at first he felt compunctions of conscience at this infringement of the rule he had laid down; but then he thought rules and vows were foolish things,—his father had overrated the importance of companionship; besides he was only associating with Jack Tickill in the half at school, which he was allowed to do in the holydays at home; and withal he determined that whatever his friend might do, he at least would avoid doing what was wrong.

I need scarcely tell my readers what was the consequence of this resolution. Poor Ambrose found no exception to the scriptural rule, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." By degrees he became so habituated to his companions' mode of thought, speech, and action, that insensibly he acquired the same, and at length was as bad as Jack or any of them.

It was a misfortune for him that his mother's protracted illness detained Mr. Elton so long from England, or he would have seen in a very few conversations with his son, what he never discovered from his letters. Ambrose wrote regularly, and always in such a strain as conveyed no serious suspicions to his father's mind as to the real state of the case. "Boys, we must remember, will be boys," he used to say, as he read Ambrose's account of the different matters that occurred at Flixby. "I see no harm in his letters; they always speak in dutiful terms of his masters, and affectionately of his schoolfellows. He says little, indeed, of religious matters; but then perhaps it is well that boys should not acquire that unreal way of speaking and writing of religion, which is one of the evil characteristics of the present day. He never uses any expressions that give me an idea of a want of sound religious principle in the writer; and Dr. Strong's letters are always most satisfactory."

In this way matters went on for two years ; when Ambrose received a letter from his father, stating that although Mrs. Elton's health was far from being established, yet it was so much improved, that she had determined upon accompanying him home, he being obliged to return, as his leave of absence was expired. The receipt of this letter produced very conflicting feelings in Ambrose's heart. He was, of course, delighted at the prospect of seeing his father, mother, and sisters, after their long absence ; but still there was a something, he could not exactly describe, that lessened his pleasure so materially, that he was not quite sure whether he did not wish that they should remain abroad longer. His father, he knew, would examine narrowly into the course of life he had been leading, and make some disagreeable inquiries as to the kind of persons with whom he was associating.

"Well," he said to himself, "I have done nothing wrong ; Dr. Strong always gives me a good character. When my father left, I was in one of the lower forms ; I am now the third boy in the school ; so, on the whole, he will not have much to complain of."

In due time the meeting took place ; Ambrose was staying with his aunt Lady Bruton during the Midsummer holydays, when he received a note informing him that the party, after a short and pleasant passage, were in London, and, if nothing occurred to prevent it, would reach Hermitage on the following day ; at the same time requesting him to see that the house was put in order, and prepared for their reception. After breakfast, accordingly, Ambrose took leave of his aunt, and went to the vicarage, where he was fully employed during the day ; and on the next, towards the evening, had the pleasure of meeting once again his parents and sisters. As soon as the chaise that conveyed them

appeared in sight, all the doubts and fears that had been agitating his mind took flight; he felt that it was really a delight, the greatest delight he had ever experienced, to embrace once more those from whom he had been so long separated, and who were to him the dearest friends he had on earth. Mr. and Mrs. Elton were both of them much pleased with the change that had taken place in their son's appearance. When they saw him last, he was an awkward boy; he was now considerably grown, intelligent, well-informed on most subjects, and appeared to them such a son as any parents might be proud of.

The first few days after their arrival, Mr. Elton was so fully employed in unpacking and arranging things, that he had not time to pay much attention to Ambrose; what he saw was satisfactory. Dr. Strong had certainly not overstated his son's attainments in learning; and in the remarks that were made upon the subject of religion, Ambrose always spoke properly and reverently.

Once or twice Mr. Elton had thrown out a hint as to his intentions of removing him from Flixby, and of preparing him for Oxford, to which University it was his intention to send him.

To these remarks he made no reply; but as the Vicar had no suspicions, he did not take notice of his son's silence. One evening, however, the subject was spoken of more decisively, and Ambrose was asked, in plain terms, if he approved of such an arrangement. For some short time he hesitated in returning an answer, and then said, "That he should like to finish his education very much under his father; but he had no wish to enter the ministry." The answer came upon Mr. Elton as the sudden intelligence of any unforeseen misfortune would have done. His hopes, his thoughts,

had all for many years been hanging, as far as his son was concerned, upon the prospect of his following his own steps, and of serving his heavenly Master in the highest of all services—the priesthood.

In his letters to him and to Dr. Strong, he had frequently broached this subject, and had constantly given directions to Ambrose for his conduct, having relation to this plan. In answer to all this, he had never once made the slightest objection to fulfilling his father's wishes; on the contrary, had often expressed himself much obliged to him for the life he was chalking out for him. It was not therefore surprising that Mr. Elton felt a very keen disappointment in his son's answer, a feeling which he could ill conceal. After a short pause, he asked what his wishes were. Ambrose said, that he had considered the matter over very carefully; and after mature deliberation, he thought that he was much more fitted for a merchant than a clergyman.

"Well," said his father, "perhaps such may be the case. My wishes were,—but in such a matter," he continued, "perhaps it is scarcely right to have wishes,—I am sure that if you have the slightest disinclination to enter holy orders, nothing in the world shall tempt me to persuade you to a course of life which might lead to the destruction, not only of your own soul, but of others under your ministry. A clergyman's duties are of so arduous a nature, and, to be fitly performed, require so much self-denial and absence of worldly feelings and pursuits, that no one should think of embracing them, unless he really feel himself inwardly moved thereto.—But we will talk over this hereafter, when I have had time for reflection."

Subsequent conversations upon the subject took place; the result of them was, a letter from Mrs. Elton to her sister, which was answered by Mr. Sandford,

who said that he should be very glad to take Ambrose into his office.

In consequence of this, Mr. Elton made proper arrangements for his son; and within three months from the date of his return to Hermitage, Ambrose was commencing his career in Mr. Sandford's office, as a Liverpool merchant.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ah! listen, youth, ere yet too late,
What evils on thy course may wait!

COLERIDGE.

THIS decision of Ambrose was, in all respects, distressing to Mr. Elton, who now blamed himself for having suffered his son to remain so long away from his guidance. "I ought," he said, in a conversation upon this subject with his wife, "to have looked after him more carefully, difficult as it was to do so; he was too young to be trusted to the care of a public school, which is insufficient to form the character aright, without the encouragement and direction of parental influence at home. The holydays, too, are certainly a very important feature in education, and the holydays in Ambrose's case have, I fear, been attended with serious evils."

Mrs. Elton endeavoured to remove from her husband's mind these self-accusations. "I am sure," she said, "that you have taken great pains with Ambrose. Up to the time of his going to Flixby, you devoted almost all your spare time to his instruction; and as it pleased God to afflict me as He has done, and to oblige us to leave the country for two years, I really do not see that you could have done better than you did.

Of course you could not prophesy what would happen. Dr. Strong ought to have paid attention to him ; and, from Ambrose's account, he has done so. And, indeed, I do not view the matter in the serious light you do ; I cannot see so very much cause of grief in the fact that Ambrose chooses one profession rather than another."

"If that was all," replied Mr. Elton, "I should agree with you ; a man may doubtless do his duty in one profession as well as in another, and in his choice should be influenced by habits and disposition ; but this is not precisely the case here. When we left England, Ambrose, who was then between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and may therefore be supposed to have known something of his own wishes and tastes, was delighted at the prospect of entering holy orders ; the life of a clergyman was, to his mind, the happiest that a person could lead,—calm and contemplative, and yet active in ministerial duties ; he used to say that he should far prefer it to any other, as its very pursuits were holy. All this is over ; and not only so, but, from his conversation, it is not difficult to gather that he now expects to obtain happiness in a different way from what he did then. Riches, pleasure, worldly comforts, luxury, and expense, are the idols in his mind's eye, which he purposes to worship, and they are to satisfy the cravings of his soul."

"If this be the case," asked Mrs. Elton, "why send him to Liverpool ? why not try some other plan ?"

"Other plans," returned her husband, "are scarcely possible. He is already almost too old for a merchant's office, and as he insisted upon going, there was no alternative. It is too sad a subject to me," continued Mr. Elton, "to talk much upon ; I feel more than I can express."

For some time after Ambrose's admission into Mr. Sandford's office, he entertained many doubts as to the propriety of the course he had pursued; he knew that his father was not pleased with his choice, and thought that in such a matter he ought to have consulted his wishes more than he had done. By degrees, however, these feelings became less and less frequent, and eventually wore off; and by the time he had been at Liverpool a few years, he was fully satisfied that he had done wisely. Mr. Sandford's business was a lucrative one; and as William declined trade altogether, it was probable that Ambrose would shortly become a working partner, and then his fortune, he considered, would be made. Under this expectation, he entered with spirit into mercantile pursuits, and became in time so well acquainted with matters of business, that the chief management devolved upon him. At length, after he had been with his uncle some eight years, the expected proposal arrived; and in due time Ambrose had the satisfaction of seeing on the door-plate Messrs. Sandford and Elton.

I have said little of what took place during his probationary state at the desk, as there is little to say. He saw a great deal of young Sandford and Jack Tickill, with them frequenting races, balls, and other places of public amusement. Herbert he met but seldom, and when he did, generally contrived to avoid much conversation with him; for, in some way or other, why he could not understand, he was always uncomfortable in his presence. There was so much in what Herbert said that applied to his own case in so disagreeable a way, that he suspected the remarks were aimed at him, and were intended to reflect upon the course of life he pursued. Such was not the case: Mr. Herbert was a person of high integrity and of strict

religious principle, and all he said was founded upon this: it was, therefore, impossible for him to express his opinions upon the common course of life adopted by men of the world, without reflecting upon them. This Ambrose did not understand; and fancying his remarks as intended to be personal, avoided him as much as possible. Occasionally he paid a visit to Hermitage; but at these times, although he laid aside his rings and pins, and other matters of a similar kind, which he knew his father would not approve of, still there was quite enough in his general bearing and conversation to convince the vicar that he was going on in a very thoughtless and careless way. On these subjects Mr. Elton frequently spoke to him, when Ambrose always promised fair, admitting that he was not so serious as he ought to be, but that, for the future, he would strive to be better. As soon, however, as the impression wore away, it was the old story again, and Ambrose Elton was the gayest of the gay, joining in all kinds of amusement, and the life and spirit of every party to which he went.

Some few years after his admission into partnership with his uncle, Mr. Sandford declined business altogether, retiring with a very handsome fortune, and leaving his nephew, on the payment of some few thousand pounds, sole master of the concern.

This change of circumstances made some alteration in his mode of living. He had lately been spending a great deal of money, and continued to do the same. Hunting, shooting, yachting, and other things of a similar nature, had been for some time his chief pursuits; nevertheless, as long as he was the junior partner in the firm, he felt himself compelled to work, and for this cause was obliged to take more sparingly of these amusements than he would otherwise have done. When

his uncle left, this impediment was removed ; and as he was now more at liberty to enjoy himself, he took advantage of it, and voting the counting-house a great bore, visited it as seldom as possible. Intelligence of these progressive steps in a course of pleasure was occasionally brought to Mr. Elton by Herbert, who, from having been introduced to the vicar in one of his visits to Liverpool, had become one of his most intimate friends, and spent a great portion of his time at Hermitage. In consequence of this, he wrote serious letters of remonstrance to his son ; all which were answered in dutiful and affectionate terms, but at the same time an attempt was made to find excuse for his conduct. Some few times—once particularly, after a serious illness—he wrote to his father in penitential terms, admitting that he had lived very differently from the way in which he ought to have done, and promising hereafter to be more circumspect. The future came, and with it its temptations ; Ambrose struggled for a short time, but his steadiness of purpose was too weak to resist ; and neglecting, as he did, to seek other and stronger aid, without which no man can stand, again he fell. Matters thus went on for some time, and nothing of any moment occurred to put a stop to the course young Elton was running. He appeared to have money at his command, for he lived in a very expensive way ; and the world around thought him happy, considering him to be rich. There was one person, however, who judged differently, and with more truth,—that person was Herbert. Mr. Beilby, a respectable solicitor in Liverpool, had, at different times lately, been employed by Ambrose to borrow large sums of money on his account, and among those to whom on one of these occasions he applied was Herbert. In the course of the transactions that followed, it came out, that the

person for whom the lawyer was negotiating was none other than the son of his friend Mr. Elton. In a short time a second application from the same quarter arrived, which Mr. Herbert declined to answer; and on a repetition of the same request for a third loan (Mr. Beilby had effected the second elsewhere), it became pretty evident to him how this kind of thing was likely to end. He accordingly informed Mr. Beilby that his circumstances would not allow of his advancing the money; and at the same time sent an earnest remonstrance to Ambrose upon his mode of living. The letter was decisive, although kind; and concluded with stating, in affectionate terms, the anguish his father had already suffered on his account, and the deep sorrow of heart he would bring on all connected with him, if he persevered in his present course. To this letter Mr. Herbert received no answer; but the next time Ambrose met him, he cut him; and a second time when Herbert would have addressed him, turned away without speaking. All further attempts were of course useless; he thought it right, however, to write to Mr. Elton on the subject, and explain to him in clear terms, that unless some change was effected in his son's career, it must end in ruin. The vicar wrote back a very kind letter, expressing deep regret at what he heard; and at the same time saying that within two days he would be down at Liverpool, and see what could be done. The two days elapsed, and Herbert was sitting in his room, expecting every moment to see his friend, when the door opened, and in came Mr. Beilby, apparently much excited at something that had just happened.

CHAPTER IX.

I've touch'd the highest point of all my greatness;
And from that full meridian of my glory
I haste now to my setting.

SHAKSPERE.

"HAVE you heard the news?" asked the lawyer, as soon as he arrived within a few feet of where Mr. Herbert was sitting.

"I have heard nothing extraordinary," answered the other.

"Well, then," he replied, "know the worst at once, —Elton's a bankrupt, and your 2000*l.* is not worth a rush."

"Is it really so?" continued Herbert; "I certainly expected such a thing, but not quite so soon. Poor fellow! and his father!"

"No doubt," said Mr. Beilby, who had listened with some impatience to his friend's brief soliloquy, — "no doubt, both father and son are in for it. But that is scarcely a question for you. What course shall you take to get something for your 2000*l.*; for which, I think, you may expect perhaps a shilling in the pound?"

"It cannot be helped," replied Herbert; "I confess I have for some time considered it in jeopardy, and my suspicions are come true."

"Humph!" said the lawyer, "come true indeed; but do you wish me to take any steps for you, and so pick up from the wreck what is to be had?"

"At present," answered Herbert, "I would rather that nothing should be done,—in fact, I do not exactly see how any thing can be done. My claim will come in with those of the other creditors; so we may suffer the matter to rest."

Mr. Beilby thought his client one of the most extraordinary men he had ever met with, and took the liberty of telling him so. Herbert replied, that 2000*l.* was certainly an immense loss to him; but as it could not be remedied, the best plan was to take it as calmly as possible. The lawyer made some other remarks, and then saying that he had pressing engagements upon the same business, left the room. He had quitted Herbert about half an hour, when Mr. Elton was announced. Having just arrived by the coach, he had not yet heard the full extent of his son's distress. This intelligence was broken to him by Herbert; and although deeply grieved, he received it with calm submission. "Ambrose," he said, "was following a dreadful course; and it was possible that nothing but this could rescue him from the destruction of body and soul into which he was running. My chief grief is, that I am not in a condition to pay his debts, which, I fear, must be very heavy."

The meeting between the father and son was a most painful one. Mr. Elton said little; but in spite of all his attempts to repress them, the big tears came ever and anon rolling down his cheeks, betraying how severe the conflict was within. Ambrose, on his part, was completely overpowered. At the sight of his father, all his past misconduct came rushing upon his mind; he felt how grievously he had neglected the good advice given to him in his earliest years, how wantonly he had despised all counsel, and the deep ingratitude he had evinced to the kindest and best of parents.

"Think not of me," said Mr. Elton, as Ambrose was uttering the feelings of his heart,—“think not of me; much could I wish that I was the only person you had injured, or that my forgiveness could clear you from what is past. Think, Ambrose, of the good and gra-

cious God you have offended ; of the wicked way in which you have wasted and despoiled His goods, for the proper use of which you will have to give in your account. Think of the fellow-creatures you have injured : the men from whom you have been borrowing money, and the debts you have been thoughtlessly contracting ; of the injustice you have done them,—an injustice which, in all human probability, you will never be able to repair. Reflect also upon the injury you have done to yourself ; I do not mean the poverty and distress you have incurred, I mean something far more important—the loss you have brought upon your soul. Had you conducted yourself as you ought to have done, it is impossible to say how much you might have done with your wealth to the glory of Almighty God and the good of your fellow-men, as it is also impossible to say to what a height of Christian perfection, by God's grace, you might have arrived. But instead of this, what is the real case ? So far from using your talents in your heavenly Master's service, you have been using them in the service of His enemy. You have by them been purchasing the means of sensuality, luxury, and self-indulgence ; and are worse, in fact, than the man of whom our blessed Saviour speaks, who was punished, not for wasting his master's goods as you have done, but for neglecting to use them aright—for hiding his talent in a napkin. What sins during this period have you not been laying upon your soul ! What evil habits, which you can never thoroughly, with your most strenuous exertions, get rid of ! Oh, Ambrose, this is indeed a sad day to us both. May God give you grace to repent, that, as far as can be, the evils you have done may be repaired ; and that you bring not down, by future ill conduct, your parents' grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

Ambrose was too humbled to speak ; this blow had completely broken his spirit, at all events for the time ; and on the present occasion he had none of those excuses for the past, or promises of amendment for the future, which at other times he had so freely tendered his father. Towards evening he accompanied Mr. Elton to Herbert's house, where they consented to remain till they could return to Hermitage. It was a serious trial to Ambrose to accept this act of kindness from Herbert ; for he could not but admit that his late conduct towards him was utterly indefensible, nor could he forget that he was in his debt 2000*l.*, which he knew he could never repay. Mr. Herbert called upon him, and requested that all might be forgotten. This kindness of the man whom he had injured, overpowered him as much as any thing that had happened. He was thankful to accept his offer, and, with Mr. Elton, accompanied him home. During the evening Ambrose was almost entirely silent ; and at an early hour retired to rest, leaving the two friends to consult together as to what could be done under the present emergency.

Herbert explained, that as to his affairs, all these would now be settled by other hands ; his best plan, as indeed his only honest plan, would be at once to give up every thing he possessed to the assignees for the benefit of his creditors, and to retire, at all events for the present, from a scene where every thing would be attended with the most painful recollections. "Of Ambrose himself," added Herbert, "I entertain better hopes than appearances perhaps would warrant ; but I have watched his career since he first came to Liverpool, and have observed that his errors have arisen more from weakness of the flesh than perversion of the will. He has been led astray by others, from a want of resolution to withstand the solicitation of their temptations. I do

not wish to defend his conduct—it has been lamentably bad ; but I wish to explain that I see something which affords hope for the future.”

“ I am thankful to hear you speak thus,” replied Mr. Elton ; “ I should indeed do wrong not to hope also,—and hope I do. In his present grief I trust there is more than a mere sorrow for the temporal loss and distress he has brought upon himself ; and would fain believe that he entertains a most bitter recollection of the sinfulness of his course. I do hope, O how fervently ! that baptismal grace is not entirely gone, nor the Holy Ghost altogether quenched ; but that he will yet truly repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.”

In a few days, Mr. Elton and his son left Liverpool for Hermitage. The day was in accordance with their feelings—it was one of those dull November days, when every thing is hidden in mist and gloom ; the rain fell in torrents ; and as Mr. Elton, who never travelled inside a coach, had taken outside places, he and Ambrose were doomed to bear the pelting of the pitiless storm throughout the day, so that, by the time they reached Hermitage, their clothes were thoroughly drenched. When they arrived at the vicarage, Mrs. Elton, who had not expected her husband to return for some days, saw at once that something very distressing had occurred. What it was she partly suspected, from the presence of her son, as also from the suspicious hints of the possibility of such an event thrown out in Mr. Herbert's letter. At length the truth was told ; and the mother had to undergo the same trial as the father had done before. It was a bitter blow to her ; for she was tenderly attached to Ambrose, and in all his former faults prophesied that nothing very serious would happen ; that he would leave off his bad habits and expen-

sive ways, and all would be well at last. Great, however, as the blow was, she knew her duty too well to give way to unavailing complaints, so bore up under it as firmly as she could; indeed, she was frequently of great service in raising her husband's spirits, who appeared to suffer almost more than she did. With her son, too, she had many conversations, and often spoke of the cause of his downfall; thus unintentionally, by her home-questions and the answers she received, discovering to him much more plainly the weakness into which he had been betrayed, and the folly of which he had been guilty, than he would otherwise have been aware of. For some period Ambrose's mind was in a very unquiet and agitated state; the meetings of his creditors, the questions put to him, and other matters connected with the bankruptcy, affected him deeply. Again, absence from Hermitage, where he enjoyed the society of those who made allowances for his faults, and treated him kindly, was in itself a great trial; and when away, he had to endure the cold looks of his former friends, and their scarcely concealed contempt, with other circumstances which appear too trifling to mention, all, however, tending to fill to the brim his cup of grief; and which produced so much anxiety and sorrow, that he felt a depression of spirits almost too heavy to bear. It was in vain that Herbert, with whom he remained when in Liverpool, endeavoured to suggest those thoughts which alone can afford us comfort in the day of trouble. He said that the consolatory texts of holy Scripture that were quoted by his friend did not apply to him. He felt that he had forfeited God's favour, and was unworthy of His care. "I have sinned too long," he said, "and too deeply to expect forgiveness; I have injured others beyond reparation; I have spent what I can never repay; and to the grave I must go,

whenever death comes, with a host of unpaid debts cleaving to my soul."

Herbert did all he could to lead him away from the despondency he had fallen into, and, with this object in view, called to his aid Mr. Basil, the parish priest, who, in his turn, produced all the passages in Scripture that appeared likely to prove of service to him in his present state. All attempts, however, were unavailing; Ambrose was always glad to see Mr. Basil when he called, but appeared unable to enter into the consolatory texts that were brought before him; and from the low state into which he was falling, Herbert feared that, unless some change was speedily effected, very serious consequences would ensue. For this reason, as soon as his affairs were so far settled as to admit of it, he advised him to take a journey to the south of England, in which he offered to accompany him. This Ambrose declined; and, much to his friend's surprise, appeared almost anxious to remain in a place which, but a short time since, he desired never to come near. At length he was persuaded to go to Hermitage; and there in the society of his friends, and amid the scenes endeared to him by the recollections of childhood, his despondency gradually left him, and in time he acquired a subdued serenity of mind to which he had been long a stranger. His time was now principally spent with his father, and by degrees he contracted a taste for the quiet and monotonous life at Hermitage, to which, in his brief visits to the vicarage, he had submitted from a sense of propriety. Much surprise would his former companions have felt, could they have seen the course of life which the lately gay and thoughtless Elton now pursued. He was in fastings and watchings oft, and practised such other acts of mortification and self-denial as had a most important influence upon his character.

His employments were principally reading and gardening, for both of which he insensibly acquired a liking; and as in former days he had derided and sneered at the idea of the daily public prayers, which he then considered a remnant of popish superstition, so now he regarded them as among the greatest blessings and privileges he possessed. All society beyond that of his own family he entirely avoided, and rarely extended his walks beyond the bounds of the parish. Occasionally he asked permission to attend Mr. Elton in visiting the sick; as by it, he said, he learned some valuable lessons for his own guidance in life. In this way his time passed. On several occasions he made some attempts to find employment, for he did not like to be burdensome to his friends, whose income was small; he considered that he was bound to labour, if for nothing else, to pay off his debts,—for debts he considered them still to be, although the process of going through the Gazette had exonerated him legally from payment. All his attempts, however, were unsuccessful; and he began to feel some impatience on account of his present inactivity, when one day he received a letter from Mr. Herbert, with whom he regularly corresponded, which made a great alteration in his plans.

CHAPTER X.

Some falls are means the happier to rise.

SHAKSPERE.

THE letter of which we spoke ran as follows:—

“Liverpool.”

“My dear friend,—I have just returned from Manchester, where I have been to attend the funeral of my

late uncle, Mr. Territt, and to make arrangements for the future management of the property he has bequeathed me. Among other things connected with this matter, I have determined upon appointing a resident agent there. He will have to undertake a portion of the book-keeping, and should understand the management and arrangement of cotton-mills, as some of his attention must be given to that department. From the system adopted at Manchester, he would have very little time to himself, as he would be expected to be in the counting-house at eight o'clock in the morning, and, with the exception of the time allowed for meals, could not leave until half-past eight at night. He would not be chief manager, but receive orders from a person who has held that situation under my late uncle. The salary will be £150 per annum. Should you feel disposed to undertake such an office as the above, it is at your service. In making this offer, I am doing, my dear Ambrose, as I would wish to be done by: this I think it due to myself to say, as I know many remarks, by no means flattering to me, will be made, should my proposal be made known. An under clerkship in a Manchester office will grate on the ears of some of your aristocratic connexions. I have consulted Mr. Elton upon the subject, who will be a more fit person to give you advice than myself. So, with fervent prayers for Divine guidance to you in this as in all things else,

“I remain, my dear Ambrose,

“Your affectionate friend,

“HENRY HERBERT.”

“Well,” said the vicar, as soon as he had finished reading the above letter, which Ambrose put into his hand, “what do you intend to do?”

"My first impression," replied Ambrose, "is to accept it; and in matters of conscience I am disposed to think that first impressions are generally true. But what is your opinion?"

"I agree with you," answered Mr. Elton, "and certainly think that you should accept it."

Ambrose said that he would reflect upon the matter during the day, and return an answer by to-morrow's post.

The day was spent in fasting and prayer; a custom he had learned from his father, who, in all cases of difficulty or trouble, was accustomed to seek advice and guidance in this way from God. And on the morrow the answer was sent, which in effect was to say, that he felt extremely obliged by his friend's offer, and would enter upon his duties as soon as Herbert wished him to do so.

In reply to this, in a few days he received a letter, requesting him to start as soon as convenient, it being desirable that the situation should be filled up at once. And accordingly, in about a week afterwards, Ambrose was on his way to Manchester. Arrived there, his first act was to ascertain the locality in which Mr. Herbert's mill was situated, which he found to be in the midst of the poorest portion of the population of Manchester. Having introduced himself to the manager Mr. Jiddowns, who had heard of his coming from Mr. Herbert, he was invited by that person to take up his quarters at his residence, until he could find suitable lodgings. This invitation was of course gladly accepted by Ambrose.

Of Mr. Jiddowns we need only say, that he had been employed on the property from his childhood; that he was a thoroughly trustworthy person in all matters of business, and fully conversant with trade. He was

a dissenter; a fact Ambrose did not learn until he had been at his house for some time, and which when he did learn, made him very uncomfortable; for he felt that, in their relative positions, circumstances might arise that would make a difference of opinion in religious matters a subject of annoyance. As, indeed, what circumstances are there in life, in which it is not desirable that all who meet together should hold the faith in "unity of spirit and in the bond of peace?"

These feelings of annoyance he determined to suppress at once. "It is God's will," he thought, "that I am here; and by His grace I will do my duty, contented with all I meet."

On the following morning he accompanied his new acquaintance to the mill; and during the day called on the clergyman of the district, introducing himself as a churchman, and saying that, among other things, he came to ask his advice as to a lodging, at the same time presenting a letter, with which he was furnished, from the vicar of Hermitage. Mr. Adams received him very kindly; and having read the letter, which was simply one of commendation from one priest to another, said he was very glad to make the acquaintance of a son of an old friend—Mr. Elton and he having been at college together. "And as such," he added, "you have a claim upon my regard beyond that of our common faith; and I hope you will at all times treat me as a friend, if I can prove of service to you. With regard to lodgings," he continued, "I have in my eye the exact place for you,—nice tidy, clean people, and, above all, thorough good religious church-people. So, if you please, I will put on my hat and accompany you there at once."

With this arrangement Ambrose agreed; and in a few minutes he and Mr. Adams were on their way to old Nathaniel Drivers, the person of whom the incum-

bent had spoken, and who, with a wife of about his own age, fifty, lived within a few hundred yards of St. George's Church, in which Mr. Adams ministered.

Ambrose liked the appearance of the people very much; and being well satisfied with the terms, he closed with them at once; and during the afternoon had his portmanteau, &c., removed to his new lodgings, where at night he took up his abode.

As might be expected, Ambrose experienced many trials in his new situation. In the first place, Mr. Jiddowns was a disagreeable person to work with. He was of a mean and suspicious nature, always fancying that people were endeavouring to cheat and deceive him, and would never believe what they said. He was also constantly annoying Ambrose by his remarks upon the bigotry and intolerance of the Church, and called the attention of others to Elton's practice of attending the daily service, and his observance of the feasts and fasts of the Church. "All very well," he said, "for Mr. Adams, who is in heart a thorough papist, and would kiss the pope's toe to-morrow, as soon as look at him; but highly improper for a man in business."

"Well, well," said Ambrose, one day, after sustaining, good humouredly, the fire of the manager for some half-hour or more, "do, I pray you, let me alone on this matter. My mind is made up upon it, and nothing shall divert me from the course I think it right to pursue. You know that I profess to be a member of the Church of England, and, as far as I am able, I would act consistently with my profession."

"No doubt," replied Mr. Jiddowns; "I know your ways,—consistent member of the Church of England, forsooth! I will tell you what, Mr. Elton,—there is not a more uncharitable and bigotted race of mortals on earth than these consistent members of the Church of

England, as you call them. But it's not worth talking about; they have had their day, and it's very nearly over with them. They can't exist, sir, long, in these liberal and enlightened days, when every man has a right to have his own religion. No bigotry and intolerance now, sir. It won't do. That Adams is a horrid uncharitable fellow: he said last week that all Christians ought to be united, that there should be no sects, no dissenters; very pretty theory indeed! For my part, I only wish that all such fellows were turned out of the country at once, as pests and vagabonds. If they'd bring the Spanish inquisition, as they write of, into England for such a purpose as this, I would say, bring it at once, and screw 'em all. Ah, sir, you may smile," added Mr. Jiddowns, who was evidently becoming much excited at his own eloquence,—“you may smile, sir, but such things may happen; and, you may depend upon it, such goings-on as you and your friends adopt cannot long be tolerated in this free and enlightened country.”

“Come,” replied Ambrose, who wished to put a stop to all these rambling and incoherent remarks—“come, Mr. Jiddowns, we won't quarrel about this just now.”

“Quarrel, sir?” repeated the manager, who felt rebuked at the calm and quiet way in which Ambrose answered his bitter remarks—“quarrel, sir? no, I shall not quarrel; it isn't worth my while to quarrel with a bankrupt!”

Ambrose said nothing more, but he felt very deeply the unkindness of the rebuke, unprovoked as it was on his part. It was the first time he had heard any allusion made to his sad fall since he came to Manchester, and he knew well that now the ice was broken, it would not be the last. His conjectures proved to be correct;

on many occasions, when Mr. Jiddowns felt annoyance with Ambrose, his ill-temper commonly found a vent in abuse, and, amongst other topics, this of the bankruptcy was a favourite one.

Ambrose was aware that if he informed Mr. Herbert, he would at once put a stop to this; but he preferred saying nothing about it; and so far his forbearance brought its own reward; for his quiet submission under these annoyances had a very material influence in teaching him self-command, and in improving his character.

It would detain us too long to go through the next three years of his life; suffice it to say, that they were spent at Manchester, and that little of any moment occurred to interfere with his usual round of duties. Most of the day was passed in the mill, or in other matters of his calling; his spare time, which was rather limited, was freely given to Mr. Adams, to whom he proved of great value, in managing his parochial library, schools, &c., and with whom he contracted a very sincere friendship. During this period, his intimacy with Herbert continued uninterrupted; they kept up a regular correspondence, and occasionally interchanged visits.

It is not easy to describe the effects upon Mr. Elton's mind of this change of conduct in his son. He now and then left his peaceful vicarage to pay him a visit; and when with him, marked with joy, which none but such a father under such circumstances can understand, the quiet and unobtrusive way in which his penitent child was striving to walk in the narrow road that leads to life. Many a grateful tear of joy did he shed, when he heard from his old college-friend Mr. Adams (with whom he had renewed the acquaintance of former days) of his son's present course.

"Truly," he observed on one occasion to that gentleman—"truly may we say, 'How unsearchable are

the judgments of God, and His ways past finding out !' And O how thankful may we feel, in such a case as this, at these words of the Apostle ! ' Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth : if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not ?' Affliction is indeed, in this case at least, a mark of God's mercy and love."

Ambrose had been at Manchester about three years, when his aunt, Lady Bruton, died, and unexpectedly left him a legacy of 5000*l.* ; a sum of money which would enable him, his friends thought, to retire altogether from his present disagreeable situation, and live in a retired and quiet way in the country. His intentions, however, were far from purchasing ease and comfort to himself by this event. As soon as he received the money, he paid it over to his creditors through Mr. Herbert. It belonged to them, he felt ; and he resolved that they should have it. This conduct of his, it is needless to say, produced very different impressions upon different persons. Sir Oliver Elton—who, although he was not very partial to his cousin, still had enough of family-pride to dislike the idea of his holding a subordinate office in a Manchester cotton-factory—was thoroughly disgusted with him, as he expressed himself, when he heard of the foolish manner in which he had squandered away his aunt's legacy. Upon Mr. Elton the effect was entirely contrary : he was most grateful when he understood what his son had done, and saw in this act an additional ground for assurance that he was now really fixed in sound and religious principles. Mr. Jiddowns thought that Ambrose was a fool ; but, as he observed, "you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. Men that have been brought up in the country among their fine-gentlemen relations make but sorry men of busi-

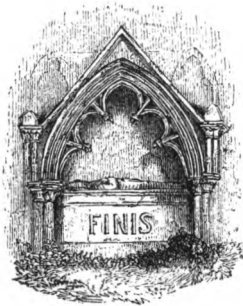
ness ; and Elton is just no exception to the rest." Mr. Adams, of course, agreed with his friend, that he was doing but an act of justice, and that, as a consistent Christian, he had no alternative. But, perhaps, among all to whom this circumstance was made known, no one more sincerely rejoiced in it than Herbert. It would be wrong to say that he was surprised ; for having narrowly watched his friend during his residence at Manchester, he was quite satisfied that under any circumstances his conduct would be marked with the strictest integrity. It was therefore without surprise that he received the note, with directions for applying this money. But he resolved to put at once into execution a plan he had long been contemplating, and which was no other than to reinstate his friend in his former position. His plans with regard to this need not be stated very minutely ; suffice it to say that they were quite satisfactory to Ambrose, who received the offer with feelings of deep gratitude. His debts were all paid to the full amount ; and he commenced again in trade as a junior partner of Herbert in his Manchester concern.

His surprise at this unexpected event was at first, as may be supposed, very great. For some time he could scarcely realise to himself the good that had befallen him ; Herbert's letter was read and re-read, with some incredulity as to its genuineness ; at length he began to feel satisfied that it was really true. Having pondered much upon it, and given thanks to Him from whom all good things come, he betook himself to his friend Mr. Adams, who heartily congratulated him upon what had happened, and said he earnestly trusted that his past troubles would enable him to bear the great trial of prosperity. Mr. Jiddowns, when he heard of it, could

not express his astonishment; but thinking that Ambrose might wish to pay him off, as he expressed it, for past favours, betook himself to another mill, where he lords it over those below him, much in the same way as he used to do aforetime. Mr. Elton having been aware some time previously of Herbert's kind intentions towards his son, was prepared for it when it happened. His expectations, however, did not prevent his sharing most cordially in the joy which this event produced, or from feeling very grateful to him who, under God, had effected it.

And now that we have accompanied the parties before us thus far, some of our readers will perhaps expect that we should introduce to their notice two fresh characters on the scene, who, in due time, shall respectively become helps meet for the two personages, Henry Herbert and Ambrose Elton. Indeed, at one period, suspicious rumours were afloat, that Herbert was not unlikely to become connected with Ambrose in a closer relationship than that of a friend; such rumours, however, were, like many others, entirely unfounded. They have both of them resolved to spend the remainder of their days in celibacy. Believing that in this state they can render better service to their divine Master's holy cause than if they were married, they have determined upon continuing as they are. It is said that, as bachelors, they do not give that satisfaction which bachelors generally give; their houses are not elegantly furnished, and their tables seldom see the luxurious fare and the costly wines so frequently seen on the tables of rich single men. They never go to balls, to political meetings, Bible-societies, or charity-sermons; they are constant in their kind attentions to the wants of the poor, and very strict in observing all the ordinances of

the Church. And here we will leave them, with the earnest hope that their exertions for the glory of God, the extension of His Church, and the benefit of their fellow-men, may be crowned with success, and that they in due time may reap their reward.



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